

Figures stand for Soviet Socialist Republics

1. Estonian
2. Latvian
3. Lithuanian
4. Byelorussian
5. Ukrainian
6. Moldavian
7. Armenian
8. Georgian
9. Azerbaijani
10. Tajik
11. Uzbek
12. Kirghiz

210, 711

George Morris

**Where
Human Rights
Are Real**



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

Джордж Моррис
ТАМ, ГДЕ ПРАВА ЧЕЛОВЕКА РЕАЛЬНЫ
На английском языке

© Progress Publishers 1980

Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

М 11301—026
016(01)—80 57—80 0802010203

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 7
<i>Chapter I</i>	
THE WAY IT BEGAN	15
<i>Chapter II</i>	
SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY IN ACTION	23
The People Govern the Country	24
A Constitution of Human Rights	30
<i>Chapter III</i>	
THE USSR FROM THE BALTIC TO THE PACIFIC . .	42
Vladimir—Gus-Khrustalny	43
Tula—Yasnaya Polyana	45
The Baltic Soviet Republics	47
Estonia	48
Lithuania	50
Latvia	54
Ukraine	57
Lvov	58
The Caucasus	62
Georgia	63
Abkhazia	65
Armenia	67
Zhigulis and KAMAZ	69
Togliatti	72
Through Siberia	74
Academgorodok	78
Far East	81

Chapter IV

SOVIET TRADE UNIONS	87
The Scope of the Trade Union Movement	88
Housing Problem	102

Chapter V

WORKING THE LAND	109
In Moldavia	110
Giant Farms	115
No Migratory Workers	117

Chapter VI

HEALTH CARE IN THE USSR	120
Disease Prevention System	122
The Sanatoriums	125
Environment—Transportation	128

Chapter VII

SOME STORIES	133
The Bolshevik Farmer	133
Love of the Motherland for Tashkent	137
Where Crime Steadily Declines	140
The Escaped from Israel	146
How They Lie	153

Chapter VIII

WHICH SOCIETY PROVIDES?	157
-----------------------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION

Two years of residence and travel in the Soviet Union as the *Daily World's* correspondent provided an extraordinary opportunity to observe and study life and the workings of the socialist system in the USSR. During the period, often accompanied by my wife Helen, we visited most of the USSR's 15 republics and some of the autonomous national governments within them. Those were two historically eventful years. I covered the very important 25th Congress of the CPSU that set in motion the current accelerated march of "advanced socialism"; the 16th Congress of the USSR trade unions; the wide discussion, involving tens of millions, prior to and after both; the discussion on, and enactment of, the new Constitution; and the unforgettable celebration of the 60th anniversary of the world's first socialist republic.

Visiting scores of cities, factories, farms, numerous institutions across the vast land—in the Ukraine, Moldavia, Uzbekistan, the Baltic and Caucasian republics and across the tremendous stretch of the Russian republic and Siberia, as far as the lands washed by Pacific waters—seeing the achievements, my mind continually shifted to a half century back.

I looked back to 1928's short visit as a delegate to a trade union congress and to my 1929-30 residence and travel in the Soviet Union for more than a year. In the two recent years, as a half century back, I had an unrestricted opportunity to go where I desired, and far more than an opportunity to see. Every-

where the door was open to meet and interview factory directors and the respective trade union leaders of an enterprise, union, city, and often even district party and government heads, leaders of community cultural, athletic, educational and such institutions of large and small communities. Most important was the unrestricted right to meet with rank and file workers and their plant committees. Also, we lived in the Soviet Union as its ordinary citizens live.

A half century ago we also experienced a very eventful period—the first year of the First Five-Year Plan. Until then, even many liberal-minded persons saw the Soviet republic as just an “experiment”. Even with achievement of rehabilitation of the Soviet economy to the pre-Revolution level, thus laying the basis for the First Five-Year Plan, the Western experts viewed the goals with skepticism. That the Soviet system would reach its 60th anniversary seemed beyond imagination in those circles. Nor, of course, the reality today, that within the three generations there would be a system of socialist countries commanding 40 per cent of the world's economy, with the USSR its powerful hub, accounting itself for a fifth of the world's economy.

At this writing, with the Tenth Plan well past the half-way point and well ahead of its charted goals, the Soviet Union turns out in 2.5 days the equivalent of all the industrial product of Russia in 1913, the highest year under czarism. At the start of the Tenth Plan in 1976, the national income of the USSR was 65 times the pre-Revolution level. On production of the means of production, Soviet data showed it was 497 times the pre-1917 level at the inauguration of the 10th Plan. And that margin widened even more since 1976.

At the time of the October Revolution, all Russia produced annually just 2.0 billion kilowatt hours of power. The 1978 rate was running at more than 1,200 billion kilowatt hours. This is more electrical energy than is turned out annually today by France, Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Italy together. For a number of years the USSR has had first place in the world in smelting of iron and steel, extraction of crude oil, coal, iron, manganese, and chromium ore, coke pro-

duction, manufacture of tractors (based on over-all engine power), diesel and electric locomotives, production of cement, saw-timber, woolen fabrics, animal fats, mineral fertilizers, and other areas of production.

Having achieved a strong foundation in basic industries, the USSR has been able to expand towards new and far greater objectives—to development of the fabulous wealth of Siberia and construction of the new 3,200 km. Trans-Siberian Railroad (BAM), construction of giant auto plants like Togliatti's and the gigantic KAMAZ project for output of super-sized trucks, and the building of many hydroelectric stations that dwarf the largest in the capitalist world, among them the complex of Bratsk-Ust-Ilimsk power stations along Siberia's Angara river, and Krasnoyarsk, the largest station in the world. The USSR now has the capacity to build the new super-port of Nakhodka on Wrangel Bay to be the main Pacific Ocean outlet for East Siberia's wealth. Also, in recent years the USSR has been able to turn its resources and science to opening the Arctic regions, now already yielding a high percentage of the USSR's coal, oil and gas. The USSR leads in construction of atomic power stations, some in the North regions.

Map makers are continually behind as new cities and towns rise with the newly-developing industries, mines, ports, railroads and agricultural enterprises.

In 1978 grain production amounted to a record 230 million tons, a level approaching the USSR's rising need. Rapidly developing is the new stage of concentration and cooperation of collective farms of whole regions on use of more advanced technology and scientific experience. The Soviet economy is now in a position to provide the most modern means for such nationwide advance and for the more rapid transformation of the village to urban-like conditions of life.

The phenomenal rise of the USSR's economy can be judged from the fact that at its start after the 1917 revolution, destruction due to World War I, the deliberate sabotage by the runaway former owners and technicians, the devastation in four years of civil war and invasion of imperialist forces, including forces

of the U.S., it took ten years (until 1927) to return to the level of 1913. And while substantial progress was made in the first three five-year plans (1928-1941), the Nazi invasion and four years of World War II devastation threw the Soviet Union far back, requiring more years of reconstruction. In effect, the USSR's economists observe that about 20 years since 1917 were lost to wars and reconstruction. But while even the 1913 economic level of Russia was just a tiny percentage by comparison with U.S. economy of that year, today the USSR's economy, knowing neither depressions nor inflation, is steadily rising at a more rapid rate of growth than the crisis-plagued, wasteful, anarchistic economy of the U.S.¹, or of the lands of Western Europe, surpassing even its own 10th five-year plan goals. The report of the Central Statistical Bureau of the USSR for the first half of 1978—the mid-point of the 10th plan—showed a rise of 5.2 per cent over the comparative period of 1977 against the 4.5 per cent planned.

As in quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports for the previous five-year plans, the same report gave indicators of the way the steady economic advance paces an uninterrupted improvement in the life of the people economically, culturally and socially. In 1978 pay envelope wages, according to the report, rose by 3 percent over 1977 in rubles that did not decline in purchasing power since the early fifties. The public consumption fund from which Soviet citizens get benefits equal to an average of a third of their take home pay, rose by 5.7 percent over 1977 and had reached an annual expenditure of more than 105 billion rubles. (About 160 million dollars at the exchange then).

Also built were general schools providing 1.4 million more places for students and care centers for about 600 thousand more pre-school children. The number of pre-school children cared for in the USSR's centers has reached more than 13 million.

One "secret" to the USSR's extraordinary success is revealed in the data given in the report on the scope of education reached

¹ In 1913 Russia's industrial production was an eighth of that of the U.S.A.; in 1976 the USSR's industrial output was equal to 80 percent of that of the U.S.A.—*Ed.*

in the Soviet Union in 1978. Of the USSR's population of 260 million, more than 95 million persons were participants in one or another field, from grade school to higher education. Of the total, 44.7 million were children in general education. Occupational-technical schools combined with middle-level ten-year education, 1.9 million. Another 4.7 million are special middle-level professional schools; 5.1 million are in higher education. The rest are in a variety of educational systems, completing ten-year schooling while at work, upgrading skills and such. It is this tremendous interest in education, in this land that had 75 percent illiteracy among grown people before the revolution, that is at the base of knowledge for 1.3 million workers in the sciences—a fourth of the number of workers in science in the whole world. More than 73 percent of the Soviet Union's workers have had a higher or middle-level education.

In all the regular annual reports, since the thirties, there is a sentence: "As in the previous years, there has been full employment and in some areas a shortage of labor." In the above report, the usual note is taken of areas that fell short of plan.

In the half century since my first residence in the Soviet Union, I visited the socialist country and travelled extensively several times—in 1959, 1966 and 1970. I was therefore able to observe and compare advances in the USSR quite closely. There is no doubt, however, that in more recent years, especially since the mid-sixties, the USSR's advance was at an accelerated pace. Reaching the level of an industrial power, second only to the United States, commanding the basic means and independent strength to plan a higher level of socialism, we saw the development of what is termed in the USSR "advanced socialism". This is defined as a new stage in socialist development, both in its economy and its social superstructure. It is a stage, as will be detailed later in this book, when the economy, social structure and the way of life is steered more directly towards the stage of Communism. It is a stage when the outlines of Communism are more visible and when the ugly remnants of the capitalist "life style" wither away more rapidly.

During each visit to the Soviet Union the elements in so-

cialism as distinct from capitalism were more sharply in evidence. But those distinguishing characteristics have emerged more sharply in recent years. And it appears that correspondingly, the lie-factories in the capitalist West are more aggressive and imaginative as the "spectre of Communism" draws nearer. Their propagandists in the press and literature, over the air, even in the so-called journals of science, concoct yarns of "crises" in socialist economy. They picture decline where there is rise. They would have people believe that nationalities in the USSR are in "rebellion" for what they term "independence" and picture a wide "dissident" trend. There is an obvious effort to falsely charge to the Soviet Union the conditions prevailing in the capitalist world—racism, warring religious groups, anti-Semitism, mass unemployment, nationalism and great chauvinism, mass hunger, mass oppression, jailing, killing of people for political reasons and sabre-rattling. Apparently those who operate the lie-factories believe that they can maintain the wall of deception indefinitely. The stupidity of that concept is becoming quite apparent, however, as is so well shown in the way President Carter's "bold stroke" for "human rights" boomeranged. Its main effect was to evoke a louder cry from American victims of oppression, racism, anti-Semitism, especially from the minority peoples and Native American Indians.

Most serious for humanity in this tactic of the enemies of socialism, of concealing the truth from the peoples of the West, is their endless effort to maintain an atmosphere of hostility towards the USSR conditioned for even possible war.

My main interest in two years of residence and travels in the Soviet Union was two-fold: to seek the facts, especially on the targets picked by the Western propagandists, and to observe the working of "advanced socialism" that is driving anti-Sovietes to hysterics.

Readers may observe that much of my experience in the Soviet Union was related to the trade unions, a movement of 122 million members. More than 45 years as a writer on trade union affairs in the U.S. partly explains my interest in unions. But most important is the high authority and extensive rights accorded the

Soviet trade unions both as a watchful power for the rights and living conditions of the USSR's workers and as the most active force for implementation of the rights and benefits of communities as a whole.

The USSR is a land of working people. There are no other classes. No rich or poor. No adults can live in idleness, unless retired or disabled. Living off the labor of others is violation of Soviet law. Almost everybody in the USSR is a member of a union. The union committee at the work location, its network of subcommittees and high percentage active in every phase of a worker's life, is the closest body to the people. It offers the best view of the "life style" of the workers.

The unions of the USSR have been a major target of the reactionary circles in U.S. unionism headed by George Meany and his successor. Since the October Revolution the reactionary bureaucracy has been most fearful of lifting the curtain so American unionists can see the far greater role and authority accorded unions under socialism.

There appeared to be a promise of better relations between the unions of the United States and of the USSR immediately after the end of World War II. At that time the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), then the more progressive side of U.S. labor, challenging the old AFL¹ bureaucracy, established friendly relations with the USSR unions, jointly participating in the launching of the World Federation of Trade Unions and exchanging delegations. A delegation that visited the Soviet Union came back with a very friendly report, which the CIO published in a widely circulated pamphlet. A foreword to that pamphlet by Philip Murray, then CIO president, saw in the friendship and cooperation between the two labor federations a powerful force for progress and peace.

The CIO delegation was a return visit to an earlier Soviet delegation to the United States headed by Vasily Kuznetsov, then president of the Soviet trade unions. The delegation toured a number of cities and was well received. Kuznetsov is today

¹ AFL—American Federation of Labor. The merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955 became the AFL-CIO.—*Ed.*

the vice-president of the Supreme Soviet and an alternate member of the Communist Party Political Bureau.

The friendship between the two centers did not last long however. The CIO leaders fell in line with the cold-war drive, broke the relationship, withdrew from the WFTU and joined the reactionary bureaucracy of the AFL in vicious attacks on the Soviet Union and its trade unions. Before long they were fully allied with the Meany forces and the Central Intelligence Agency in a move to use U.S. unions to cover imperialist operations in various parts of the world (as disclosed in 1966-67 when the earlier CIA scandal broke).

How ironic that an officialdom of trade unions representing less than 23 percent of the U.S. workers, that has yet to win a national health law and most of the other protective legislation the Soviet workers have had for 60 years, sneeringly still refuses to "recognize" a labor movement of 122 million members, with a near 100 percent rate of organization. The bureaucracy used its political power to pressure the government against any relaxation of the ban on admission of trade union delegations from the USSR or any exchanges between the U.S. and USSR unions. In the recent period, however, there have been some breakthroughs for friendly relations with the USSR unions, in defiance of the Meany bureaucracy. A number of USSR union delegations have been given U.S. visas and toured the country under auspices of the United Automobile Workers and other unions. U.S. union delegations to the USSR have returned to tell with amazement of what they saw. The Soviet trade unions have a fraternal relationship and exchanges with almost every trade union center in the world except the United States. Covering the 16th Congress of the USSR unions I saw the presence of fraternal delegates from more than 100 unions, most of whom delivered greeting speeches. Increasing pressure within the U.S. trade unions may force a change in relations before long. And a fraternal relationship between U.S. and Soviet trade unions may well end the American curtain of falsehoods about the USSR.

The following pages may cast some light on life in the Soviet Union and socialist democracy as we saw it.

CHAPTER I

THE WAY IT BEGAN

In March 1928, as a youth representative in the United States delegation, headed by William Z. Foster, to the Fourth Congress of the Red International of Trade Unions in Moscow, it hardly entered my mind that I may live to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the first socialist republic, much less witness the Supreme Soviet session marking the historic occasion. Yes, I was one of the relatively few thousand who were fortunate to see and hear live USSR President and Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev opening the celebration, while tens of millions saw the event on TV. And what a celebration it was, in the homes, halls and streets of every city and hamlet in the great land!

Listening to Brezhnev's summary of the achievements since the October Revolution and of the change it brought to the world, thoughts continually came to mind of what I witnessed nearly a half century earlier.

Eye-witness accounts or tours of the Soviet Union by Americans were very rare in those early years. There wasn't even a diplomatic relationship with the U.S. until 1933. Until the October Revolution socialists generally had only a hazy idea of the form a socialist society would take. Even many who were life-time socialists in the U.S. couldn't recognize a socialist state when faced with the reality of what they advocated. Many friends of the Soviet Union saw it as just a "trial", an "experiment". But some of the most ardent American friends actually came, as

groups of miners and mechanics, to help on projects to rebuild and build in the years when such helping hands were welcomed by Vladimir Lenin personally, because the replacement of sabotaging and run-away technologists was still at an early stage.

In those days the experts of the West jeered and sneered at Soviet post-revolutionary efforts to rehabilitate the shattered economy that was among the most backward before the war. They couldn't conceive of reconstruction without the capitalist profit incentive. Far from aid, the U.S. and Western powers bemoaned the failure of their military intervention and were more interested in another attempt to overthrow the socialist state. The right-wing Social Democrats shouted that you can't lift a backward land to a level of socialism.

To me, as to other Communists (I am a charter member since 1919), the opportunity to be in the Soviet Union was an opportunity to see socialism in practice, how to combat the enemies and to meet the skepticism of the sincere friends of the Soviet Union. Vivid in my mind is the visit to a large garment plant in Moscow during the short 1928 trip. What impressed me were the long rows of workers at power-driven sewing machines and, in the cutting room, the use of electric cutting machines, much like those I was then using at my trade in New York. This is hardly of significance by today's standards, but 50 years ago it was tremendous progress because appeals for aid some years earlier reported that in garment plants sewing machines were piled up unused for want of unavailable bobbins. It was also a source of pride for us because one of the large unions of the U.S., the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, headed by Sidney Hillman, as distinguished from the top labor bureaucracy generally, initiated in 1922 the formation of the Russian-American Industrial Corporation, financed through shares bought by many of the Union's members and some garment employers, to help the Soviet government set up a modern garment industry. It was not a profit venture, and was helpful.

Going through other plants, our delegation was impressed by evidence that new technologists were at work and old plants and machines were in working order. We saw much new construc-

tion. To us it was clear evidence that the officially reported data of the country's economy having reached the pre-war 1913 level was a fact and the hopes and predictions of the Western experts were shattered.

The real turning point came during my visit a year later as the stormy first year of the First Five-Year Plan got under way. This time it was a plan for an offensive to reach new heights, substantially beyond the 1913 level. Spirit was running very high everywhere. The talk everywhere was of the new big projects and production goals that seemed at the time beyond imagination. The Western experts, having suffered a crushing defeat of their estimate that it would take 50 years to reach the 1913 level, now concentrated on ridiculing the First Five-Year Plan goals as unrealistic. How silly they appeared when the five-year plan was completed in *four years* with an enthusiasm on the production lines that no land had ever known before.

It was in that year that the Revolution came with full force to the village in the form of farm collectivization, and elimination of the power of the kulak¹ exploiters of peasants. To the grandchildren of the peasants of 1929 it may appear improbable that the poor of a village then had no more as a technical base for their collectives than what few horses, livestock and plows they could put together. But that is how the collective farms started. And often with less. It was that start, however, that provided the seeds for the gigantic scientifically run farms of today and the living conditions for their members the peasants of 1929 couldn't even dream of.

The early hardships were very great. There was division in the village; the kulak vs. the poor, many of whom were landless and worked as laborers. Then, there were many middle-level farmers who did not exploit peasants but at that stage still had no incentive for collectivization. During the first sweep of collectivization, with expropriation for the collectives of the prop-

¹ Kulaks were the largest group of rural bourgeoisie. They mercilessly exploited their farm hands, the rural poor and other rural workers.—*Ed.*

erties of the kulaks, the line was breached in many areas to the middle farmers. That called for a correction and strong control by the Communist Party protecting the middle peasants from pressure to involuntarily get into collectives. I personally witnessed some of the conflicts in the collectivization process. One case comes to mind which took place in a district (like our counties) office of the Party. Two young peasants from a village were hanging around for hours in waiting to see the secretary. Their plea had been denied before, but they pressed on militantly for the right to classify a middle peasant as a kulak.

The secretary explained to me that they sought the inclusion because that middle peasant was quite well off in terms of farm equipment and horses. They were told categorically they couldn't expropriate him. On top of this type of conflict was the resistance of the kulaks against being reduced to the level of other peasants. They used every form of deception to divide the village, including provocation of violence. Before giving up their positions they slaughtered their cattle and sold the meat, so as to leave nothing of value for the collectives. They organized themselves into gangs and attacked the villages. They used the village priests against collectivization. Burning of crops of collectives was a common tactic of the kulaks.

It took a number of years before such resistance ended. And as modern technology and scientific management of collective farms increased, middle also found it advantageous to join the collectives.

My first look at the way the Five-Year Plan was unfolding in industry was in September 1929, in Leningrad, then the major center of industry. I represented the U.S. Young Communists at the International Youth Day parade. Watching the parade from the grand stand we saw what the world was to see in every Soviet parade since; banners reporting industrial achievement and the goals to be reached in the current plan.

The Leningrad Komsomol gave me a grand reception, with an escort through some of the city's major plants, including the famed Putilov Works whose workers had a significant role in the Revolution. There I saw heavy machinery work, but noted

that most of the plant's equipment was still with labels of Western firms. At the big Electrosila plant, an assembly line of electrical home appliances was in operation. A visit to the Red Triangle Rubber plant, then the largest in Leningrad, was another highlight of the tour. There was vigor on every production line—a drive towards a plan target.

From Leningrad came a three-day train trip to Baku in the Caucasian republic of Azerbaijan, for the Youth Day celebration of that city. Baku then had all the features of an Eastern city with Islamic mosques much more in evidence than high-rise buildings or factories. But as in czarist days it was a major oil center. They told me of the problems in post-Revolution days before technologists who could be trusted and were able to operate the industry developed. But progress was already considerably beyond the czarist level. A boat ride in Baku's half-moon shaped Caspian Bay showed oil wells far off shore.

Baku then little resembled its present self with a population¹ of one million, a metro and modern high-rise apartment buildings. In 1929 many women still wore scarves covering their faces in public—and in the intense heat too. Involvement of women in industrial work was still a problem. But much headway was already made. We visited a garment shop where several hundred women worked, *but only women*. The Soviet government banned any decrees or forms of pressure on women to drop the veils in the Caucasus or in the Mid-Asian republics. Progress, elimination of illiteracy and socialist education was in time the effective solution to that problem.

Some days after the Baku trip, I was invited to attend the Tenth Anniversary celebration of the Ukrainian Komsomol in Kiev. That city was not a major industrial center then. No major projects were then planned there because it was too close to what was at that time the border with capitalism. But farther east Kharkov was teeming with industrial development. In the Serp i Molot (Hammer and Sickle) plant they showed me new-type

¹ According to the 1979 census, the population of Baku was 1,550,000.—Ed.

agricultural implements they were turning out, but not yet tractors. Among the show places of Kharkov were its two newly-built ten-storey buildings, the highest structures in the city. From the roof-top I was able to get a panoramic view of the city. Today it will take a much greater height to get such a view. Kharkov even has a metro.

During the winter of 1929 I joined an excursion to the Volkhov Electric Station near Leningrad. It was a small station by present-day standards in the Soviet Union, but it was the first example of what Lenin meant by his GOELRO plan—the network of power stations the Soviet government had to have for successful building of socialism. It was also proof that the Soviet government had the knowledge and technology to build such power plants. Since then Lenin's GOELRO plan became a reality. Many of the stations have 50 times the capacity of Volkhov. The Krasnoyarsk station on Siberia's Yenisei, with a capacity of 6.4 million kilowatts, has more than 100 times the capacity of the first station.

In mid-1930, as the second year of the five-year plan was under way, I took a trip along the Volga in a small motor boat with stop-overs along the way. One was at Sormovo, near Nizhni Novgorod (now Gorky), another of the major metal plants that was making headway on its plan. Walking through the production isles, little red flags were noticeable at certain machines. They signified the worker was involved in socialist emulation. Those were only the first signs of a movement that today involves a large majority of the workers and many millions of them in the higher stage of exemplary Communist Labor. Emulation today is more organized, with formal agreements on commitments for objectives, and more in the spirit of "Communist attitude to labor".

Nizhni-Novgorod (Gorky) was then still like the fair-center it was traditionally, but on its outskirts, along the Volga's shore something new was on. Construction was under way for the first big automobile plant, under direction of Ford technicians. The project was under one of the earliest contracts the Soviet government was able to obtain with a U.S. capitalist enterprise. The

Soviet government paid heavily for the technology and experience. The Soviet director of the work that was just beginning, while escorting me to the construction site, pointed to a row of especially constructed bungalows housing the Ford men, and remarked, "We had to build these for them." From his tone and some uncomplimentary remarks about the Ford men, it was apparent that relations were far from good. The Ford men sneered at the inexperience of Soviet workers and weren't overly cooperative.

At the construction site could be seen just the foundation for the two units of the plant, giant oblong frames of concrete for automobile assembly lines as long as city blocks. Many hundreds were doing shovel work inside those oblongs and close by construction was begun to house workers who were to work in the plant.

In time Gorky became the big auto production center it is today. The peasants who made up the major production force when the plant was built, became experienced mechanics, thousands of them eventually shifted to the many other plants to teach new workers.

Our little ship went further down the Volga, stopping at Cheboksary, the capital of the Chuvash Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, a town now of 300,000, but then of just 10,000 population, perched on a high bank. There wasn't anything in that town resembling industry. It was just a market center for peasants of surrounding villages. I was put up in the newly-built "peasant house" the only hostel in town, providing visiting peasants an overnight place. Chuvashia, then with a population of a million, had gained the status of an autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1925.

With the aid of the Communist Party's director of education, I boarded the only bus working out of Cheboksary to see a nearby walled monastery which was the seat of "culture" before the Revolution came to Chuvashia. The rickety bus rolled on a cobble-stoned road, passing some villages. The horses of Chuvashia had not yet become accustomed to moving objects that were not alive. At the sight of the approaching bus, horses ig-

nored their drivers and steered off wildly towards farm land, on occasion turning over wagons in ditches.

Already then the autonomous republic developed an extensive cultural life: invited to an open-air concert, I was introduced to persons represented as the republic's outstanding artists, singers, actors and poets.

Cheboksary today is one of the Soviet Union's large cities, a major industrial center on the Volga. The Chuvash Republic compares well with the many autonomous republics in the Russian Federation industrially, in education, science and living standards.

Some recollections of a half century back are cited to underline what the first socialist republic had to start with. By 1941, substantial progress was made through three five-year plans. Then came the Hitlerite invasion and destruction of life, industries and homes on a scale unequalled in history. But already during my visit and travels in 1959, there was very little evidence of war destruction. The tempo of reconstruction and renewal, of the onward march and record growth, was very swift, and on a steadily broadened scope. The USSR achieved an economic base that provides the means for limitless advance. There are many observers in the capitalist world who either deliberately for propaganda purposes or out of lack of knowledge, ignore the backwardness of pre-Revolutionary Russia and the struggle the new society founded by Lenin had to wage to survive. But most important of all, *they ignore the vitality socialism arouses in a people that made the miraculous advance possible.* The "secret" is simply the fact that there is far greater willingness to work and fight, if need be, for yourself and society than for an exploiting master class.

CHAPTER II

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

My two years in the Soviet Union was an excellent opportunity to see socialist democracy in action, better understand it and compare its development to earlier stages of the country's history. As the new Constitution stresses, there are no longer class divisions in the USSR, it is now a government of *all the people*. There is not a sign left of the pre-Revolution capitalist or feudal exploiters of labor. Exploitation of the labor of others is forbidden by socialist law. The former capitalists ran off to capitalist lands, or, in time, became integrated to socialist ways. Three socialist generations have eliminated all traces of the former rulers, both of city and village.

Understandably, the course of Soviet democracy was influenced by the changes. As long as there was some base in the population for the former rulers—capitalists, agents of foreign firms, kulaks, intellectuals and technicians or military men who hung on to the former rulers, the government had to apply a strong hand and rigid suppression of any form of organized political opposition. The Marxist-Leninist concept of democracy differs sharply from bourgeois-democratic forms. In the Soviet Union there is no pretense that its democracy is open to former enemies and opponents of socialism. Its concept is of a democracy open *only to working people*, whether in the manual occupations or in intellectual and technological fields. The idea of allowing organizations opposed to socialism to function is out. As individuals, persons are able to vote against candidates in the secret ballot-

ing, or to run for posts. To this day an infinitesimal number still cast negative votes.

In capitalist countries the claim is shouted from the rooftops that the "majority" rules and its democracy is "equal" for all. Under this cover are a maze of restrictions which combined with open suppression of working class and other popular movements, virtual monopoly of all the means of information and news, makes the pretense of democracy "for all" a mockery. In the final analysis bourgeois democracy is democracy for only the ruling circles. As an example, in the United States barely half the U.S. voters even voted in the 1976 Presidential election. There aren't a dozen of 535 in both houses of Congress who can even claim to be of the working class. After two hundred years, there are still only the two parties of capitalism, with effective power.

THE PEOPLE GOVERN THE COUNTRY

The basic determinant of Soviet democracy is not alone whether the majority of the people give it ballot approval. The Soviet measure of democracy is the *extent of popular participation* in the administration and activity in the life and decision-making of the country. As we shall see further in this work, none of the countries that have had bourgeois democracy for centuries come anywhere near the Soviet Union in the extent of involvement of people in the affairs of their countries. Tens of millions are actually tied actively to the affairs of the Soviet Union, from the local Soviet (council) to the top legislative body, the 1,517-member Supreme Soviet.

Another misunderstanding by many in the West, even by some liberal friends of the Soviet Union, is the "one-party" system. Anti-Soviet propagandists make much of this, contrasting it with the multi-party capitalist states. The Marxist-Leninist concept of parties is that they are an expression of the class division and conflicts in society. A party represents a class. If there is no class division there is no real base for conflicting parties. But the very structural concept of parties differs. The actual members of a capitalist party are the few, usually closed clubs and hidden

powers who make the decisions and steer their course. The United States is most typical. In the Soviet Union the Communist Party with 16,500,000 members is based on the key principle that *every member must be an active dues-paying member in one of its primary units*. Its units correspond to the structure of Soviet society as a whole. A party with the rigidly enforced requirement that every member must be good standing in dues and activity, is not a party that is, or can be, run by politicians in "smoke-filled" rooms. But that is not all. In the Soviet Union there is actually more of a "multi-party" authority and public influence in political affairs than in capitalist lands. As the Soviet Constitution specifies, not only sections of the Communist Party can nominate candidates, *but every public mass organization—trade unions with 122 million members, the Young Communist League (Komsomol) with 38 million, cooperatives, work collectives, and meetings of servicemen in their military units.*

Most candidates for judicial and Soviet posts are, in fact, initially nominated at factory and institution general meetings. This nominating process is the key element in Soviet elections. In view of the fact that a candidate's ability to run for office does not depend on his financial means or contributors, a person whose record as a citizen is unknown can hardly be nominated.

We really come down to the question: *under what system are more of the people involved in the political process—capitalist or Soviet?* The answer is obvious on its face. But you have to see the way the Soviet election process works to see the mass involvement. They don't have the exchange of mud, scandal disclosures, trickery, fraud, racist and ethnical influences, expenditures of many millions, campaign theatricals and showers of false promises that characterize elections in capitalist lands. But what impresses a Western observer is that despite the "one-party" system and the rarity of contests in the finals, many millions are involved in the election campaigns of the Soviet Union. The election campaign is no less an education campaign than the picking of candidates. The most foolish thing candidates can do in the Soviet Union is to prepare themselves with what they think may be a more "popular look" to make unrealistic promises, to

brag about their personal qualities, to boast of or depend on friendship with people in high quarters, to be untruthful in regard to their own record in the field of work, or to personally solicit support for nomination. Any such methods, so common in capitalist politics, would mean sure rejection. The grounds for nomination, are entirely different in the Soviet Union than in capitalist lands: Is the record in industry good? Is the prospective candidate modest or a self-seeker? Is he or she tending to be bureaucratic or do they have a good relationship with people? Is there anything against them like racist or other chauvinist attitude? In addition, *an election campaign is also the period of review of the state of an enterprise, institution, or community and the type of candidate who would best qualify to meet its problems.*

My quest for information on the way Soviet democracy works, was all the greater in light of President Carter's sudden emergence as a "human rights" advocate and denunciation of the USSR's policy. In February 1976, I sought to interview Soviet officials on the Soviet election system. At the offices of the Supreme Soviet in the Kremlin, Dmitry Nikolayevich Nikitin, head of the Department on Problems of the Work of Soviets, accompanied by Pyotr Prochorovich Gureyev, head of the Juridical Department of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, gave more than two hours in answer to my queries. The questions were such as Americans would usually ask, and called attention to much of the anti-Soviet propaganda on the subject.

In summary, here are some of the replies and explanations. The balloting in the 1974 Supreme Soviet election totaled 161,689,612 votes—99.98 percent of the eligible total. Why such stress to turn-out almost every vote in absence of a contest? The campaign is also an intense campaign of education, carried out through "two million election commissions in which more than nine million persons participate actively". In effect it is a mobilization for further advances on the economic front and for other Soviet objectives. The casting of the ballot becomes a vote of confidence. The number of ballots not cast has been declining steadily since 1937 when 96.7 percent of the eligible voters voted.

The two-house Supreme Soviet, of 767 in the Soviet of the Union and 750 in the Soviet of Nationalities, in 1976 included 421 members (27.7 percent) who were not members of the Communist Party. More than half of the 1,517 members are workers and collective farmers. Nikitin observed that by workers are meant production workers and farmers of state farms. It was in response to my observation that since there are no capitalists or any kind of exploiting business people in the USSR, what is the composition of the rest? He said technicians, service people, intellectuals, people in the sciences, cultural fields, store employees, medical; and full-time Communist Party officials. I observed that people in those fields are also workers, all on wages just as production workers. He agreed, but said that the statistical distinction is to stress the nature of the Soviet government.

Elections for the 50,437 local Soviets in the 15 Soviet Republics, 20 autonomous republics, eight autonomous regions and 10 autonomous areas, name a total of more than 2.2 million deputies. *They represent more than 100 nationalities.* In 1976, 56.2 percent were not members of the Communist Party. More than 30 percent were under age 30.

Nikitin observed that the USSR is the only country in the world that *sets by law the year-round duties the deputy is obliged to carry out and to give an account to the constituents.* He presented me with a pamphlet outlining those requirements. A nominee, even if unopposed, usually addresses 10 to 15 meetings in the election district. It is at those meetings that the candidate listens to criticism and suggestions. The law also requires strict attention to suggestions from the constituents at election meetings. In a period of three years, Nikitin noted, 1,700,000 such suggestions were made and more than 1,500,000 of them received attention and were acted upon.

"We esteem this process very highly as a manifestation of socialist democracy," said Nikitin. "Not one suggestion, be it from a village or in the Supreme Soviet, is ignored." Referring to the nine million involved in the election commissions, he said 64 percent are workers and farmers. The Supreme Soviet's 1,517 members are of 61 nationalities, with 475 women.

Contests do take place in Soviet elections, *but most are at the nominating stage*. Nominations may come from more than one enterprise or institution in an election district. In such cases a conference of representatives of the respective nominating organizations is held with a majority vote deciding. The losers usually withdraw. A deputy's requirement to respect the mandate of his or her constituents is so strict that the law provides the right of recall if the mandate is ignored. Nikitin, pointing to a section of Soviet law that makes the provision, observed that in a period of ten years, *more than 4,500 deputies of local Soviets have been recalled, almost 100 from autonomous regions and even from the Supreme Soviet there were 11 recalls*.

Subsequently, Mikhail Georgadze, Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, presented more data at a press conference on Soviet elections. He observed that supplemented to the 2.2 million Soviet deputies are volunteer sub-committees of the respective Soviets, *totalling in 1976 more than 30 million*. Georgadze also noted that in the 1975 election campaign *more than 126 million citizens attended the meetings at which candidates faced a review*. In that year more than 50 million persons attended meetings at which the executive committees of the Soviets came up for review.

Georgadze defined Soviet democracy in a statement, as follows:

"There is a democracy of a new socialist type in the Soviet Union. It has its own principles and traditions. In evaluating our democracy we follow the guidelines set by Lenin, that freedom and democracy must be seen from a class viewpoint. There is no freedom in general, or democracy in general. Socialist democracy is the democracy for the working people. It expresses the interests of the working people and bars the possibility of its use to harm the people, socialism or the work for peace."

The Soviet usage of the term "working people" designates all who perform useful services beyond production, whether physical, mental or in the arts, or pensioners and others unable to work because of age or illness.

As an example to show the major base of the Soviet system in the plants, Georgadze sighted the big Likhachov auto plant

in Moscow. Its members include one deputy in the Supreme Soviet and six in the Moscow city Soviet and 58 in the Soviet of the district in which the plant is located.

The method for legislative (Soviet) decisions also differs from those of the U.S. or other capitalist lands. Many of Western lands charge the short sessions of the Supreme Soviet or of lower Soviets, as "undemocratic" or "Party dictated". For Americans, especially, the absence of debates at open sessions, endless talk, even filibusters or other tricky maneuvers often expressing the lobbies of differing interests among sections of the bourgeoisie, seems an "absence of democracy". But, as has become quite traditional in U.S. politics, even the slightest reform or progressive proposal usually come after considerable pressure in the form of demonstrations at national, state or city legislatures, mass campaigns and petitions to the legislators, demonstrations of unions, minority peoples, women, youth or whatever groups may be most affected. Georgadze observed that every Soviet has permanent commissions on various aspects of a Soviet's problems, where most of the preparation on a legislative proposal is done. There are 1.8 million deputies in those commissions at all levels and 2.6 million other citizens are coopted to participate in their meetings at work. The emphasis in the Soviet legislative process is on the involvement of experts and others with experience on given problems. In that way, decisions are not compromises between lobbies of business or other interests, or reflections of class conflict. *There are no antagonistic classes or lobbies in the USSR's legislatures*. There is no need for workers to struggle and pressure for years, most often unsuccessfully, for a reform or concession. In the Soviet Union the workers have an effective power through their unions and other public organizations and the legally provided right to *initiate legislation* at all levels of the Soviets. They have the deputies and the press. In the two years in the USSR I found a very interesting part of the press the daily page or two of letters and articles discussing proposals for improving legislation or rules, criticising sharply inadequate enforcement of existing legislation, exposing irregularities in factories or stores and discussing hundreds of other such issues. A deci-

sion of the Central Committee of the Communist Party given wide publicity, declared it a strict requirement that all letters to the press must be accounted for by referral to the related ministry or properly answered, with authority of experts, scientists or affected institutions. The extent of this process can be judged from the annual statistics of newspapers on the number of letters they received. *Pravda* reported 464,766 letters for 1976; *Izvestia* 467,995 for 1975 and *Trud*, the trade union daily 670,969 in 1976.

This obligation has been put into the Constitution, in Article 49 as follows: "Officials are obliged, within established time-limits, to examine citizens' proposals and requests, to reply to them, and to take appropriate action. Persecution for criticism is prohibited. Persons guilty of such persecution shall be called to account."

Such figures are the dimensions of the USSR's political democracy, and what Lenin meant when he wrote, "Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic." He explained that is so because "it is the freest, widest and in most resolute manner, enlists all the masses in the task of government".

A CONSTITUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Soviet concept of human rights is far more basic and much broader than even the most liberal pretensions of rights in bourgeois democracies. This was true under the Soviet Union's first Constitution immediately after the October Revolution, and of the constitutions that followed. The new, fourth Constitution, enacted by the Supreme Soviet on October 7, 1977, spells out Soviet rights specifically, section by section, and includes some new rights.

As the new Constitution says, it is a continuation of the 1936 and the earlier Constitutions. But in the Soviet Union they do not view the Constitution as something static. It is reviewed to meet rapidly changing times, and especially to fit the stage of "developed socialist society" now in the USSR, the world changes

since 1936 and the existence of a system of a substantial number of socialist republics. This is in contrast to the position of the U.S. rulers who never tire of emphasizing that the U.S. Constitution is a "remarkable document" that stood a 200-year test and may never need basic changes. In the two centuries, 26 amendments were passed dealing mostly with administrative, tax, election procedure and such issues. Abolition of chattel slavery in 1865, voting rights for women in 1920 and reduction of the voting age to 18 in 1971 were *very belatedly the only historically important issues. But the U.S. Constitution remains basically a document for regulation of property relations and insurance for perpetuation of the capitalist system.* It is also loaded with checks on popular influence and with much vague, equivocal language on such rights as there are. Court interpretations often change under influence of the relation of forces in the class struggle. The Supreme Court judges, appointed by presidents for life, do the interpreting and ruling. The issue, of course, is not only what's in the Constitution but, no less important, *under what class rule it is interpreted and enforced.*

The importance attached to the new Constitution is shown by the procedure for its framing and enactment. Leonid Brezhnev, Communist Party General Secretary and President of the USSR, personally headed the commission that worked on the draft of the Constitution and on the final document. For four months the people of the USSR discussed the draft. *Pravda*, as the other dailies and journals, devoted at least two full pages to letters and articles on proposals for the Constitution. Brezhnev began his report by first describing the unprecedented extent of public participation in the discussion. Eighty percent of the USSR's adult population, in all 140 million persons, took part. The discussion was in the 450,000 open meetings of the Communist Party as well as in the trade unions, in the Young Communist League and other of the public and community organizations. Just in the Party's meetings, more than three million persons took the floor.

The tremendous participation was also induced by the type of document discussed. The draft, in plain language, covered the

needs of the people. It was not in language for jurists and lawyers. Brezhnev noted, however, that while the document was greeted with general acclaim, the committee he chaired received some 400,000 amendments and proposals. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR, considering these recommendations, made approximately 150 changes in the texts of 118 of the 173 articles and added one new article.

The Constitution states it is the fundamental law of a "developed socialist society", in which the "working class is the leading force", in which the political system assures "an increasingly active participation of the working people in state affairs". *Throughout, the document lays emphasis on increasing the role of public mass organizations, in the first place the member trade unions, for an effective administration in social-political affairs.*

Article 9 says:

"The principal direction in the development of the political system of Soviet society is the extension of socialist democracy, namely ever broader participation of citizens in managing the affairs of society and the state, continuous improvement of the machinery of state, heightening of the activity of public organizations, strengthening of the system of people's control, consolidation of the legal foundations of the functioning of the state and of public life, greater openness and publicity, and constant responsiveness to public opinion."

Listening to Brezhnev's report on the amendments accepted or rejected, and his general characterization of the Constitution, I thought of the workings of our two-century old Constitution in relation to current issues. After many years of campaigning for an Equal Rights Amendment /ERA/ that would make equal rights for women a fundamental law, the movement came up against an immovable roadblock—the want of backing of three more state legislatures for the required 38 of the fifty states, to make the ERA amendment part of the Constitution. Also came to mind the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling permitting the American Nazi Party to parade in Skokie, Illinois, in which a large number of Jewish survivors of Hitler's death camps live. That was to mark Hitler's birthday—in the name of free speech, of course.



View of Moscow from the Kremlin



People of various professions and nationalities are represented in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

A group of delegates poses in front of the Supreme Soviet building: (left to right) R. Beibutov, a soloist in the Azerbaijan Theater of Song; Yu. Sidorov, Hero of Socialist Labor, a foreman at a machine factory in Leningrad; T. Pardayeva, a foreman on a cotton farm in Uzbekistan; I. Kasumov, an Azerbaijan writer; and D. Galkin, Hero of Socialist Labor, director of a factory in the Urals



During a break between sessions: (left to right) V. Sochneva, from the Penza Region, a foreman on a state farm; V. Stefanov, from Bryansk, an adjuster at a mechanical factory; K. Karayev, a composer; and L. Chumenyuk, from the Ukraine, a poultry-yard worker

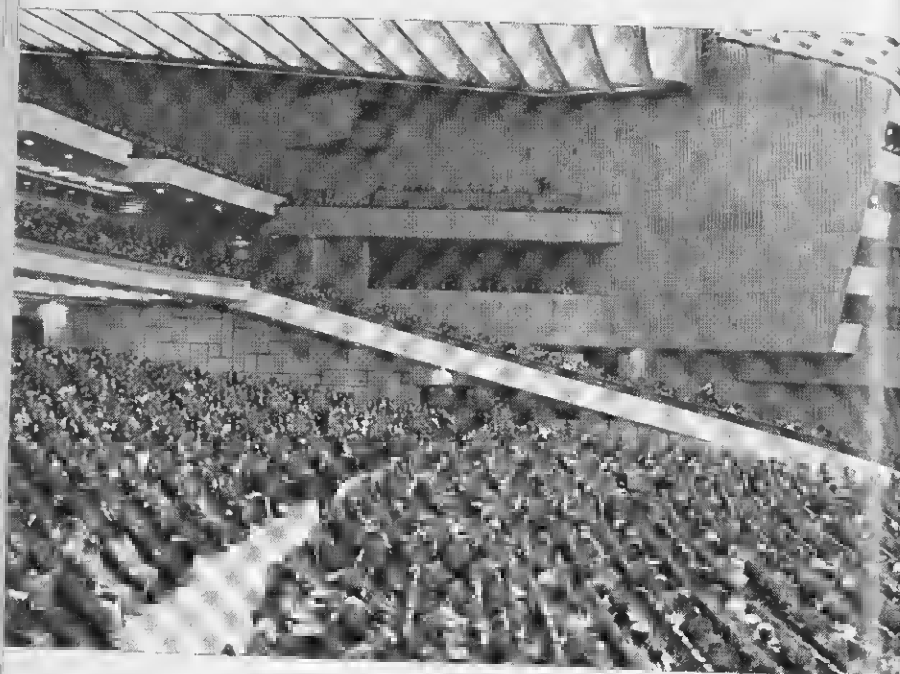


Discussing the draft of the Constitution.

Workers at a combine factory in the Ukraine
Workers at a milk-processing plant in Riga



Students at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute



At the 16th Congress of Trade Unions of the USSR:

During a session in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses in Moscow

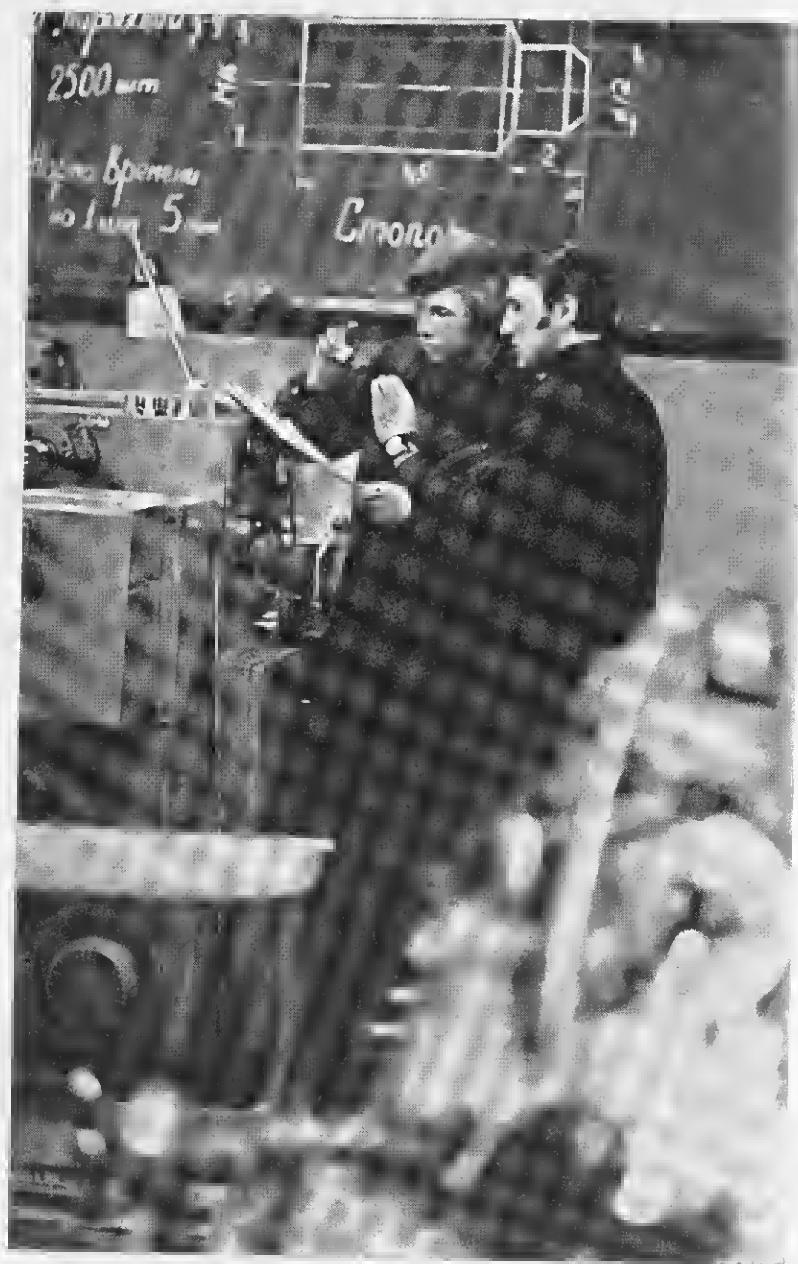
Delegates to the Congress from the Tajik SSR in the Conference Hall



A postage stamp commemorating the new, 1977 Constitution of the USSR



After graduation ceremonies, students from Moscow schools traditionally gather in Red Square



Vocational training starts at school. A lesson in lathe operation at one of Leningrad's interschool training and production centers



The Skala—a holiday house in Gagra on the Black Sea

When the working week is over, it is nice to relax in the snowy forest at a Recreation Center outside of town. Such centers are operated by many organizations



Ice fishing



The privileged class of the Soviet Union!

A new inhabitant of the Earth



Concern is shown for children from the first days of their lives. A visit to a doctor in a children's clinic

Six-year-olds in a kindergarten preparatory group





Break time in a school

A gymnastics group in a Minsk school



In the reading room of the State Library for
Children of the Ukrainian Republic

A children's music school in Frunze (Kirghizia)



At a performance of the Bashkir Puppet Theater



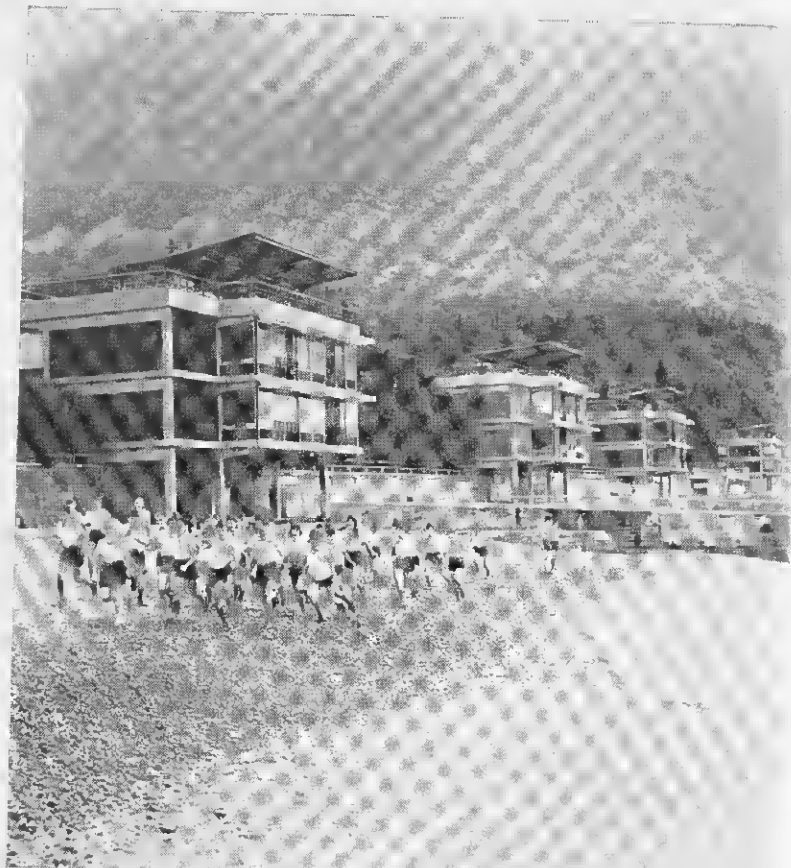
Pioneers from a camp maintained by a Novolipetsk metallurgical factory stop to rest during a hike



A ball for school graduates in the Proletarski District in Moscow



Anatoli Karpov, World Chess Champion, is a frequent guest at the chess school in the Leningrad Palace of Pioneers



In the International Pioneer Camp Artek

The tempo of the five-year plan is especially evident in the scale of new construction in the capital. Residential buildings in Strogino, a new micro-district





The Moscow Metro:

Komsomolskaya station

Pushkinskaya station



Vladimir. The Golden Gates

View of the central part of Suzdal



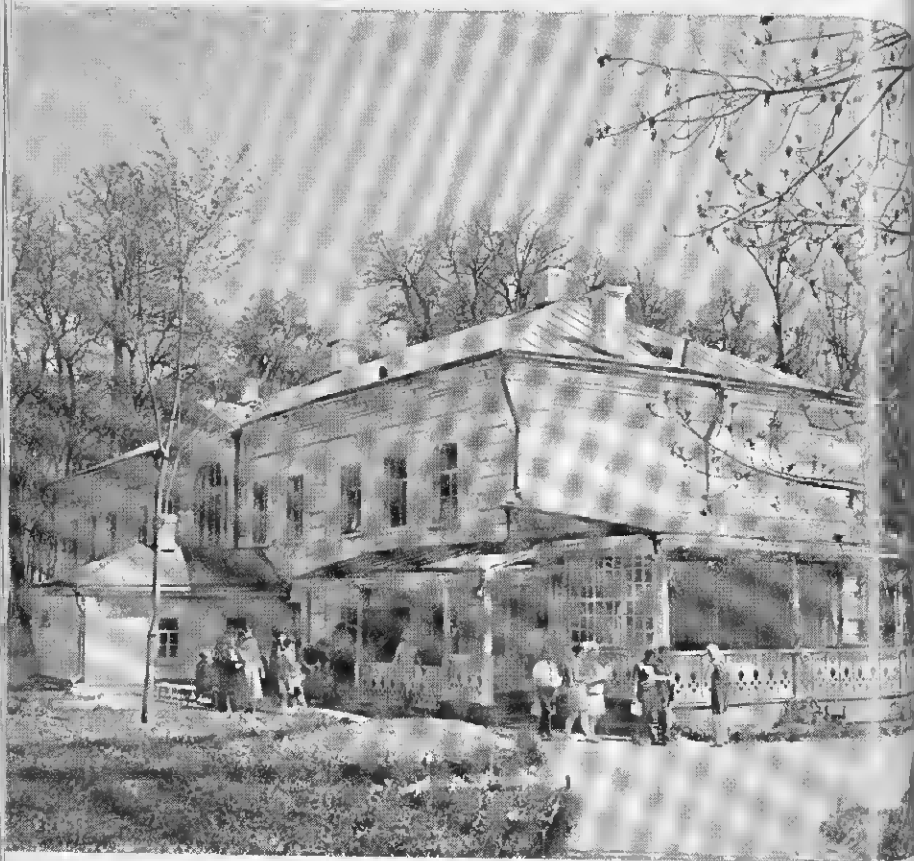
The Holy Gates of the Rizopolozhenski Monastery





The artistry of the masters
of the Gus-Khrustalny
glass factory
is famous both in the USSR and abroad





Lev Tolstoy's home in Yasnaya Polyana, now
a museum



Riga. A view of the old city



Riga. One of the city's numerous new housing units

33 SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Also, the campaign sweeping the United States to cripple or nullify civil rights legislation that was won in the 1960's. And most shameful, was the Carter's administration's timing of his ridiculous "human rights" charge as a constitution that makes human rights a reality was being enacted by the people of the Soviet Union.

Actually, the long list of basic human rights provided in the new Constitution had been generally in effect in the life of the Soviet people for many years. The Soviet government is now strong enough economically and *politically to make the specific guarantee of those rights the fundamental law of the land.* Most of the rights guaranteed are not even covered in the constitutions of the U.S. or other Western states. On the other hand, many practices in the U.S. and other capitalist countries classed as "human rights", are banned in the USSR. The holiest of "human rights", the exploitation of others for profit, is forbidden in the USSR on pain of heavy prison sentences. Advocacy of any form of racism or national chauvinism is a crime in the USSR, but in the U.S., with evident Supreme Court approval, openly racist and anti-Semitic organizations, such as the gangster-like American Nazi Party, the Ku Klux Klan and many other such outfits, legally publish their papers and books that go through the mails, operate from open offices, stage parades and attack organizations of minority peoples.

Article 34 of the new Constitution says:

"Citizens of the USSR are equal before the law, without distinction of origin, social or property status, race or nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, type and nature of occupation, domicile or other status.

"The equal rights of citizens of the USSR are guaranteed in all fields of economic, political, social, and cultural life."

Article 36 stresses the policy of "drawing together of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR" and warns:

"Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, and any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility or contempt, are punishable by law."

In the United States, chattel slavery for millions of Blacks was "constitutional" for more than 75 years under the Constitution. It took a bloody civil war to get an amendment outlawing slavery, and since then, discrimination in many forms continued notwithstanding a vaguely-worded equality provision.

Operation of crime syndicates in the business of prostitution, gambling, narcotics, loan-sharking, job-selling and such pursuits is virtually a "human right" in the U.S. because they operate openly in every city, with the constitution no serious obstacle.

Organisations advocating or inciting war operate legally in the United States. The new Soviet Constitution in Article 28, declaring for steadfastly pursuing "a Leninist policy of peace" and "supporting the struggle of peoples for national liberation" declares plainly: "In the USSR war propaganda is banned."

Another of the holiest "human rights" in the U.S., as in all capitalist lands, is the right to rob people through inflation and to squeeze prices all the "market" could bear at a given time. But under the Soviet Constitution the government's rigid price control outlaws violation of the prices, or price gouging of any type.

In the two hundred years of the U.S. Constitution, the right of employers, with government and police support, to combat organization of unions and deny collective bargaining rights, has been in line with the pursuit of "free enterprise"—the most sacred of "human rights".

Under the Soviet Constitution unions are accorded rights and authority organizations of workers in capitalist lands cannot even dream of. Article 105 of the USSR's Fundamentals of Labour Legislation declares: "Officials guilty of violation of labour legislation . . . shall be held legally responsible."

Most of the long list of key human rights guaranteed by the USSR's Constitution are not even touched in the U.S. Constitution. We note some of them. "Women and men have equal rights in the USSR," says Article 35, spelling out the provision in detail, but adds also the rights of "special labour and health protection measures for women", "legal protection and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leaves and

other benefits for expectant mothers and gradual reduction of working time for mothers with small children". A 1977 Supreme Court ruling in the U.S. held that working expectant mothers cannot even claim paid time off under the sick leave provision in their union contract.

Article 40 declares Soviet citizens "have the right to work (that is, to guaranteed employment and pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work, and not below the state-established minimum), including the right to choose their trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with due account of the needs of society". In the U.S. there isn't the slightest such right, jobs are not secure and the right to throw people out of employment is an employer's sacred right. Few can choose an occupation because under capitalism most are *forced to choose whatever they could find on the labor market*.

The "right to rest and leisure" provided in Article 41, declares the working week must not exceed 41 hours, with shorter hours in some industries. The article makes *mandatory* annual vacations and holidays with full pay and underlines that guarantee with a *requirement by the government* to provide a "network of cultural, educational and health-building institutions, and the development on a mass scale of sport, physical culture, and camping and tourism; by the provision of neighbourhood recreational facilities, and of other opportunities for rational use of free time".

That guarantee, long practiced, entitles every working person in the USSR a minimum of 15 working days with full pay for vacations, with some industries, such as mining and in chemicals or hot jobs, giving as long as six weeks off. The general average is about 24 days off. But no less important is the real provision of resorts and camps for tens of millions at *a cost workers can afford*.

"Qualified medical care provided by state health institutions" *at no cost is guaranteed* in Article 42. That provision details the state's responsibility to insure all the latest health and disease prevention care. It also covers a ban on child labor.

The U.S. still has no national health law. Health care is in a

serious crisis due to skyrocketing hospitalization and doctor cost and the very high cost of medical insurance driven up by inflation.

"Citizens of the USSR have the right to housing," says Article 44. "This right is ensured by the development and upkeep of state and socially-owned housing." Also, they must be at "low rents and low charges for utility services". That policy has been in effect since the earliest days of the Soviet Union and rents have remained unchanged since.¹ Current costs, including all utilities run at about what an American family pays monthly for just gas and light, 4 to 5 percent of a family budget. In the past four five-year plans about 11 million apartments have been built in each five-year plan and *given* to occupants without pre-payment of a kopeck. Much housing is also built through cooperatives or by individuals with very low interest loans.

Article 45 ensures the "free provision of all forms of education"² detailing the well-known system of the USSR's schools, institutions, vocational, specialized secondary and higher education in which 95 million children, youths and adults are currently students. It also ensures the "opportunity to attend a school where teaching is in the native language".

Article 52 declares, "Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the *right to profess or not to profess* any religion, and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda," and adds, "In the USSR, the church is separated from the state, and the school from the church."

Article 100 provides for the broad and popular Party and non-party political base of the USSR as follows:

"The following shall have the right to nominate candidates: *branches and organisations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, trade unions, and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League; co-operatives and other public organisations; work collectives, and meetings of servicemen in their military units.*"

¹ The cost of apartment housing in the USSR has not changed since 1928, although in half-century the technical equipment in buildings has improved.—*Ed.*

² All emphases mine.—*Auth.*

In the USSR candidates are nominated who are known to people as fellow workers in plant or farm, as leaders, scientists, artists or others with distinction for their contribution to society, *NOT as politicians*. There are no "professional politicians" in Soviet society. The socialist standard for citizen in the USSR, is first of all *one who must perform useful work*. As Article 60 says, "Evasion of socially useful work is incompatible with the principles of socialist society."

The idea that a union in the United States should nominate a candidate for political office is inconceivable under present circumstances. A union's choice would have to be nominated through one of the two capitalist parties, an extremely difficult and doubtful course. The workers as yet do not have their own politically effective mass-based party. That is why the U.S. Senate of 100 members has 65 lawyers, most of whom have business clients, 13 businessmen and bankers. A third are millionaires, and not a worker among the rest. Of the 435 House members, 215 are lawyers, 81 are businessmen, the rest a mixture with hardly a worker among them.

The Constitution of the USSR sets new objectives in line with its advanced socialism stage. "The state promotes development of collective farm-and-co-operative property and its approximation to state property." That envisions a course towards phasing out the distinction between the publicly-owned industries and farms from the farm or other cooperatives where property is owned only by the collective. Already much of that distinction is disappearing, as I observed, where new advanced industrial forms tie many collective farms into modern complexes.

Article 19 sets the aim of enhancing society's homogeneity by steadily diminishing difference between town and country, between hand and brain labor, and for drawing together the many nationalities in the USSR. That course has been under way for some time with success apparent in much of the vast land.

Several articles provide for full rights in the development of culture, the arts, sciences, athletics, the advancement of youth and the retired, the latter pensioned at age 60 for men, 55 for women.

As one can see by the very structure of the Constitution, Soviet socialism provides for a society in which the government ensures at low or no cost all basic human rights enabling its people to rapidly develop unhindered in their chosen pursuits, be it in production, the sciences or arts. Meeting people in the USSR one is struck by a characteristic common to all: none seem to be plagued or worried by money problems, the next month's rent, meeting college costs for children, job insecurity, medical bills, fear of retirement, vacation costs and such other concerns common in non-socialist lands. The stock argument of free enterprisers that people freed of so many worries don't have much incentive to work and advance, is proven sheer nonsense by socialist experience. Where in the capitalist world have the people jumped so rapidly from a backward land of mostly illiterates to what they are today in industrially powerful USSR?

Most important in understanding how a socialist society works, to take the USSR as the major example, is that every phase in it is planned and *everyone in it is involved in the drive towards a goal*. Most is heard of production plans, but closely related are plans of all services, all institutions, all stores, all schools, all city or regional developments, all medical, recreational, athletic and scientific institutions. There seems to be a measuring rod to fit every field. No land is more statistically conscious, because the figures show the pace of the drive towards a goal. *Even every family can plan for itself, and figure on certain major purchases by a certain time because wage raises are real and steady*. The capitalist lands are planless, because every capitalist or monopolist does his own thing. Even the capitalist cannot plan beyond short duration because of capitalist economic anarchy—a recession every three years or so, unpredictable market and price conditions, permanent mass unemployment, unpredictable competition from various sources, political changes and a dog-eat-dog influence at every turn. Those who really “guide” a capitalist society are the handful of powerful monopoly interests and their political tools.

The major distinguishing element is that a socialist country has the guidance of the Communist Party armed with Marxism-Leninism. That has been the most important factor in explaining

the Soviet Union's rapid and steady advance. The new Constitution recognizes this fact by, *for the first time, incorporating the guidance role of the Communist Party as the fundamental law of the USSR*. This is not a bureaucratically run party whose members just register but have no other duty or obligation. This is a party of 16,500,000 members who are OBLIGED to be active in their fields, connected with the units of every public organization and every Soviet, at all levels. Article 6 of the Constitution defines the Communist Party's role as follows:

“The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organisations and public organisations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. . . .

“The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.

“All party organisations shall function within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR.”

The above highlights of the way the fundamental law of the USSR works in comparison with the capitalist, suggests also why the propagandists of the West timed their ravings on “human rights” with the Soviet Union's new constitutional advance. It's the ancient tactic of the thief pointing a finger at others. The imperialists, gripped by an endless crisis they cannot meet, steadily losing the confidence of their own peoples, resorting more than ever to deceiving, clubbing and imprisoning people to hold on to power, are increasingly disturbed by the progress of a society that does not suffer from the ills and rotting of capitalism.

With the suddenness of a response to a call, the assortment of a few dozen contacts of the Central Intelligence Agency, or misfits within Soviet society objectively useful to the CIA, blossomed forth as “dissidents”.

From various localities a couple or so revealed themselves as Lithuanian “freedom” lovers; or as dissidents of “Ukrainian”, “Georgian”, “Jewish” or other label. Financed and given other

forms of encouragement from abroad, these groups were given world-wide publicity with much of the bourgeois press corps in Moscow the major connecting link. As correspondent in the USSR, I noticed how little interest most of the U.S. bourgeois press corps of 29 persons took in the real news developments in those two very eventful years. They were most responsive to press conferences with "dissident" Sakharoff or the frequent call to them for interviews at the homes of other "dissidents". Frequently, a major Soviet news story would get bare attention in a U.S. paper while something Sakharoff or another "dissident" said would get front-page billings.

Article 50 of the Soviet Constitution specifies clearly the guarantee of "freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly", and ensures all available means to make those rights a reality. But rejecting the hypocrisies of bourgeois constitutions, Article 50 also adds that those freedoms must be practiced "*in accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system*". The Constitution declares plainly that (as we already noted quoting Mikhail Georgadze) there is no freedom in general or democracy in general in the USSR, and that socialist democracy is democracy *only for those who are working people in the socialist society*. Those who suddenly came forward as "dissidents" have no base in the Soviet Union and have nothing in common with the society in which they are citizens. They openly declare their enmity to it. Their association with the false "human rights" charge of President Carter's Administration is a clear giveaway of their true nature and allegiance.

On returning to the U.S. it soon became apparent to me that the Carter Administration's maneuver boomeranged with force. It is in the United States that masses of people, in demonstrations and marches, demand that he "look home" on human rights, where, like the imprisoned Wilmington Ten¹, many others are imprisoned in violation of their human rights. And it was on

the very day that the "dissident" Scharansky was found guilty of treason and espionage and when the White House termed it a "tragedy", that the "long march" of hundreds of American Indians who walked more than 3,000 miles, from the northwest state of Washington to the Capital greeted by 1,500 supporters, gathered before the White House with the demand for freedom and return of Indian lands. Human rights is truly an issue, but not in the USSR where its human rights Constitution is practiced as the law of the land.

¹ The Rev. Ben Chase, the last of the ten imprisoned in North Carolina, was freed on December 14, 1979.—Ed.

CHAPTER III

THE USSR
FROM THE BALTIC TO THE PACIFIC

Moscow is the heart of the USSR. There is much in it to see—its tremendous industrial development, its institutes, museums, theaters, metro stations, all sorts of facilities for recreation and entertainment, and, of course, the Kremlin. One can be busy for many weeks just taking a good look at the city now of almost eight million residents. But you have to travel in all directions of the vast land if you want to really see and study it. No two are alike of its 15 republics, nor 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous regions and 10 autonomous areas. They differ in history, language and they cherish and preserve everything that traces their past. Traditions of many centuries still color the customs, food and ways of the people. This heterogeneity is strongly emphasized in the Soviet Union's nationality policy as *the essential characteristic of the union of socialist communities*. They are not discouraged or interfered with in any way. In fact, it was only with the rise of the socialist order that some of these nationalities received a script for their language, encouragement to develop their art and culture and to develop research of their roots and history.

Most remarkable, however, as one travels through the immense country, with an area about three times that of the USA, is the unity of the people, cemented by Marxism-Leninism and the Communist Party, and the goals of socialism. All are bilingual, *with the Russian language the uniting tongue*.

I rarely came across a person who didn't speak Russian fluent-

ly. The exceptions were several elderly people in remote mountain villages in Armenia and Abkhazia and an elderly Uzbek on a farm near Tashkent who needed some translation.

The high respect in the USSR for the history of peoples with all relics related to it differs much from the attitude in the U.S. where there is constant struggle against the abuse and disregard of the sacred areas or ancient burial grounds of American Indians, especially if they are in the way of construction of a mine or a road. The oldest things to see north of the Mexican border are the chain of missions set up by the Spaniards to Christianize the "heathen".

VLADIMIR—GUS-KHRUSTALNY

One of the first trips soon after our arrival in the Soviet Union was to 900-year-old Vladimir, once the center of the rising Russian nation. It was a small town of 47,000, with just some handicraft establishments before the October Revolution. Now it is a bustling industrial city of about 300,000, the capital of a region with many large industries. Churches and cathedrals, some as old as 850 years, stand out prominently in the city's panorama along with the many blocks of high rise garden apartments along broad tree-lined avenues built under socialism. You enter Moscow Street through the 12th Century Golden Gates. The many churches, colorful and no two alike, seem well preserved and cared for. So is the large Nativity Monastery on high ground surrounded by a high wall, well preserved. But while all such historical relics of architecture and art that give Vladimir its picturesque look are so well guarded, the city's and region's main attention goes to the rapid industrial progress—to the large tractor plant and the giant auto-parts works and the many other industries described to us by M. A. Ponomarev, the region's Communist Party Secretary. A visit to the Industry Exhibition Hall showed a display of examples of Vladimir's production, among them major home appliances, like refrigerators and such.

Our main objective in visiting the district was the neighboring Bolshevik farm (of which we will tell in later pages), the nearby Gus-Khrustalny crystal plant and Suzdal, main concentration of traditional Russian art and architecture chiefly of the medieval period.

The Soviet government is spending millions of rubles in restoration work in Suzdal, especially on the work of Andrei Rublev who did much of his magnificent work in Suzdal during the early fifteenth century. Suzdal is a treat to see because it shows the high level of art and architecture achieved by Russian painters and builders a thousand years ago, but little noticed in the world. The Soviet Union has opened the doors wide to see them. A big motel complex was under construction. In the many cities I was to visit later—some of Greek Orthodox background, or of Roman Catholic as in Lithuania, or Islamic background as in Uzbekistan's 2,500-year old Samarkand, remains of the past are carefully preserved. *Soviet law classes all monuments and other historically valuable remains of the past as public property.* Abuse in any way is violation of the law. No one can appropriate or buy or sell such historic remains of the past. This is in no sense a compromise with religion or contradiction to the atheism predominant among the Soviet people, or admiration of feudalism.

The visit to Gus-Khrustalny was to a plant founded by Russian artists in decorative glass more than 200 years ago, with a history of fame in the field. Now it still specializes in decorative crystals, with some of the USSR's leading artists in that field working in it. But it is a big enterprise equipped with the most modern machinery for mass production of crystal products designed by artists. We went through an exhibit of some of the prized Russian-styled products of Gus-Khrustalny artists. Crystal work, as was soon evident in many exhibits, is widespread in the Soviet Union which like the popular art of ceramics is in the style of the given nationality or area. Most familiar to tourists are the black lacquered jewelry boxes of various sizes produced in the village of Palckh and of similar folk-art nature, of Ukrainian and other areas, reflective of the localities that produce

them. There is probably no country in the world that puts a higher value on folk-art and encouragement of art in general, than the Soviet Union.

TULA—YASNAYA POLYANA

Tula, directly south of Moscow about four hours by train, is another 800-year old city where the past merges with the highly developed new. But Tula is the traditional city of metal mechanics. It was long a center for arms production in czarist days. The city was also a target of the nazi invaders, regarded as vital because of its arms manufacture and as a gateway to Moscow. But the fascist 45-day siege came no closer than the outskirts because of Tula's heroic resistance. It was awarded the coveted "Hero City" honor, presented personally by Leonid Brezhnev at a celebration in 1977. Tula boasts that in its 800 years no enemy ever penetrated its defenses.

The city with a half million residents, still proud of its traditions as a metal center, is famed for its modern machine industries. In pre-Revolution days Tula was culturally as backward and with as low a literacy level as all cities of old Russia. But today, we were told, Tula has gone far beyond eliminating illiteracy; the district has 175,000 specialists in occupations and professions with diplomas. The Tula area has 1,165 cultural clubs, 960 libraries with 13 million books, 1,200 film projectors in operation, mostly in the clubs, four stage theaters, a circus, a philharmonic orchestra, eight museums and two branches of the Moscow University. In the past decade 7.5 million square meters of housing was built and handed free to occupants.

We spent a day in the AZOT Chemical Works near Tula, one of the USSR's largest chemical complexes, employing 12,500 workers. We also visited the Lenin collective farm near neighbouring Novomoskovsk. Most interesting was the conference with the director and economists of AZOT. They described how, starting with a systematic review of the plant's divisions in 1968 jointly by the union and management, a cut of 2,500 in the number

of workers was achieved along with a 91 percent increase in productivity, mostly through automation and new technology. Three million rubles of the seven million rubles saved, went for wage increases. Nevertheless, no jobs were lost and current employment is even slightly higher than before the reductions. Knowing American experience where a union would term such cooperation for elimination of workers treachery and where technological advances mean fewer jobs and more permanently jobless, we asked for an explanation of the riddle. AZOT's director explained. In the Soviet Union there is a shortage of labor. But the plant has been steadily expanding its production beyond fertilizer which had been its main product. The eliminated workers are continually absorbed by the added plants. The "freed" workers get a training for the new jobs over a period of two years at the average wage they earned. Many are occupied in AZOT's large steadily working construction and woodworking shops on repair, remodeling and even on construction of apartment houses for workers in AZOT, usually in Novomoskovsk which we also visited. The construction teams built the large Cultural Palace of the plant's workers, and the prophylactoria (disease prevention center), the size of a small hospital. No one went without a job or lost a day's wages.

Tula's long reputation as a metal center was also due to its reputation as the samovar-producing center of Russia. The city still produces 1.5 million samovars a year—but many are electric, or purchased for traditional decorative display. The samovar has been a Russian symbol for centuries, and they don't let you forget it in Tula. They have a companion to it—the Tula cake. Those are flatcakes of honey molded with all sorts of inscriptions to suit occasions—holidays, anniversaries, marriages, births and birthdays. One is most likely to see a samovar in many Soviet homes. Its operation is much more complicated (unless it is a phoney one, electrified) than warming a tea kettle on a gas stove. But often for parties or celebrations, the samovar is put to work and, traditionally, guests pour themselves tea. In Tula they swear that there is no real tea unless it is from a charcoal-burning samovar.

In Tula, too, they cherish their history and Russia's best traditions. They take pride in Yasnaya Polyana, the large estate not far from Tula, where Tolstoy lived and wrote. The nazis reached it and did some damage. The government is ensuring good care. We visited Yasnaya Polyana in the company of a guide who appeared very familiar with Tolstoy's life and made the visit very interesting. We went through the rooms of Tolstoy's residence, impressed with the details of the great man who lived simply. We took the long walk to his grave, a grassy clearing in the woods of the estate on the edge of high ground overlooking a valley. His grave is just a simple grass-covered mound, barely larger than a coffin. Nothing more. That's how Tolstoy wanted it. The simplicity of the man symbolized progressive Russians in days when it took courage to be a progressive.

THE BALTIC SOVIET REPUBLICS

An opportunity to visit the Baltic Soviet republics was especially welcomed because the U.S. capitalist press, fed lies by an assortment of pro-nazi refugees who were given a haven in the United States, has been particularly vicious against the three republics. An invitation to American journalists to come and see for themselves how the Baltic peoples feel about the Soviet system, only brought forth more falsehoods that shame the journalistic profession.

The journey was also interesting because these three republics did not really begin to build a socialist life until after the nazis were driven out by Soviet forces and defeated in 1944.¹ We spent two weeks in the three republics and were given full freedom to visit a half dozen cities, many factories and farms. We conferred with the top officials of each country and spoke to many

¹ Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia voluntarily joined the USSR in 1940. However, fascist Germany's treacherous attack on the Soviet Union in June, 1941, interrupted the growth of socialism which had begun in these republics. The socialist transformation of the Baltic republics was begun anew after their liberation in 1944-1945.

persons. One is struck first by the fact that the attitude of people in the Baltic republics towards socialism and the Soviet Union does not differ from that of the rest of the Soviet people. This is clear not only from the evidence everywhere that they have become fully integrated with Soviet life and procedures. Their over-fulfilling of the economic goals and role as Communists, compares with the best of the USSR's regions. Estonia, for example, topped its planned 36-39 percent rise in production for the Ninth Five-Year plan with an actual rise of 41 percent. Lithuania rose 49 percent and Latvia 36 percent.

The pace of advance in these republics is in large measure due to the general policy of the Communist Party of the USSR Central Committee for mobilization of resources of all industrial regions of the Soviet Union, notwithstanding the difficult period of post-war reconstruction to help the Baltic newcomers to socialism.

Another factor is that illusions in capitalism couldn't linger long with the murder of 125,000 Estonians in the nazi death camps; 300,000 Latvians, plus 280,000 sent to Germany as slaves; and an even larger number of Lithuanians, including the destruction of almost all of the large Jewish population. Hence the greater interest in the drive to get in stride with the other Soviet republics.

ESTONIA

The population of the Baltic republics is relatively small. The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, the smallest, has only 1,466,000 people. Apparently that, too, contributed to greater emphasis on efficiency, most advanced technology and most economic use of the workforce. Edgar Tõnurist, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Estonia, told us that in place of the 150,000 small individually operated farms there are now only a little above 300 collective or government farm economies. The average size of a farm now is 8,000 hectares (about 20,000 acres) with the largest farm in the republic 16,000 hectares. We visited the Rakveresk 12,000 hectare collective farm and the 15,000



The pig-breeding complex, largest in the Latvian SSR of the state farm Ogra



Vilnius. General view of one region of the city



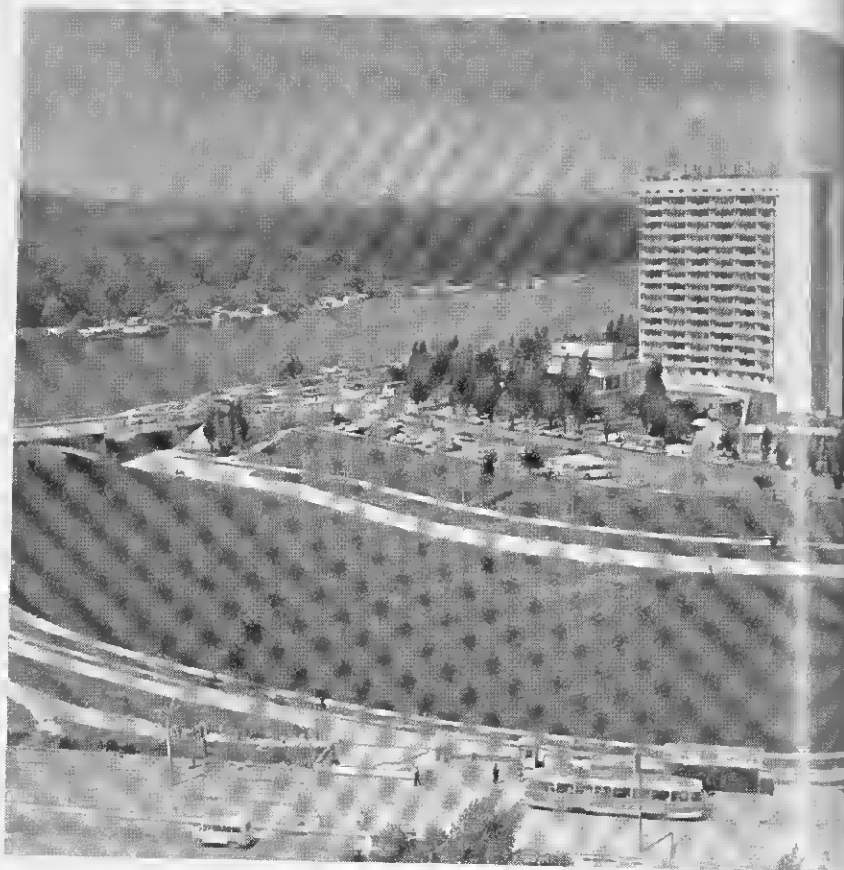
View of old Tallinn



Shale mining in the Estonian SSR



Kiev. View of Cathedral Square in the
Kiev-Pechersky Monastery



The convenient new residential district Rusanovka is one of the most beautiful parts of the city



Lvov, one of the oldest and most charming cities in the Soviet Union



The main assembly line for color television sets at the Ekran works in Lvov

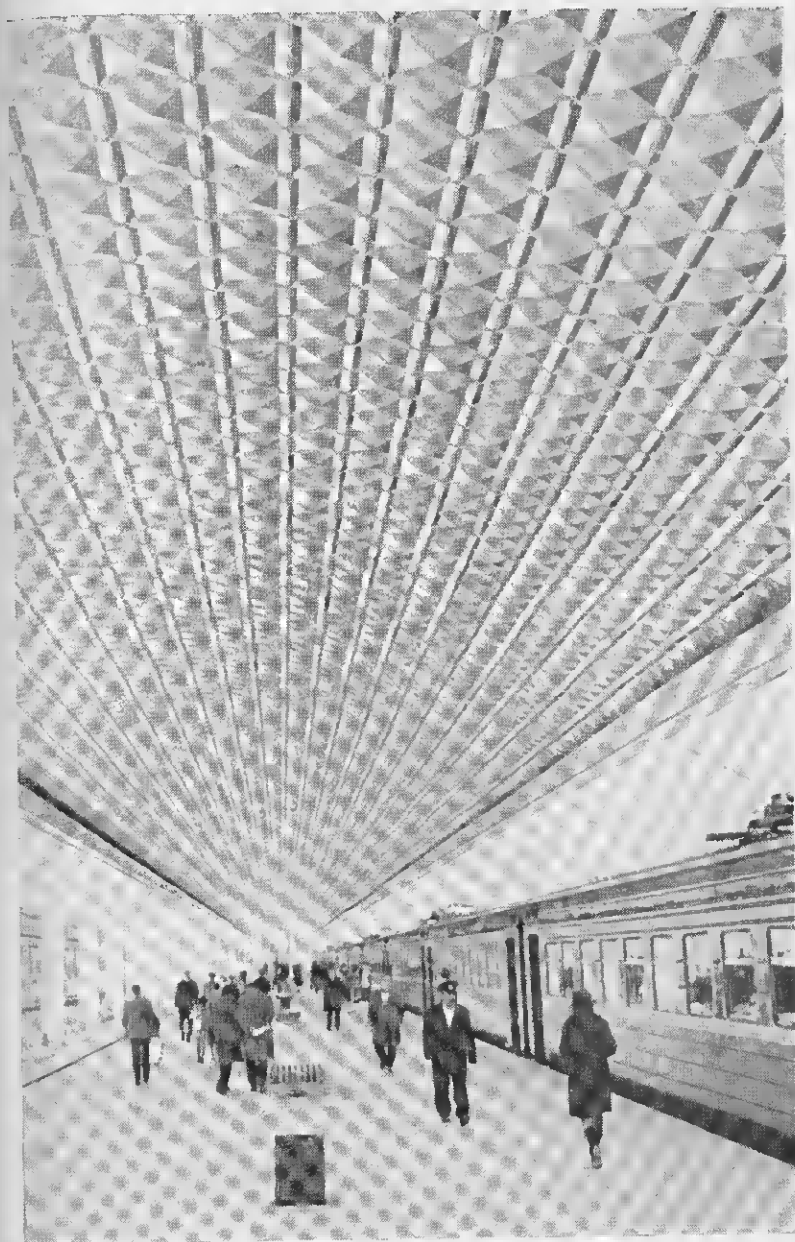


A new micro-district with earthquake-resistant multistory buildings in Kishinev, the capital of Moldavia

T-70S tractors on the unloading platform of a Kishinev tractor factory



Work in the vineyards of the Moldova state farm



One of the new platforms at the Tbilisi railroad station



Georgia. The Rustavi Steel Plant



Mechanized tea harvesting on a Georgian state farm



The Pitsunda resort in the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic

hectare Vinni state farm. The collective farm, while basically in meat and milk products, also operated a complex of a half dozen mechanized establishments—a starch factory, a winery, a large fish hatchery fully equipped and mechanized, furniture manufacture and construction of individual homes for members of the collective. The farm has 1,800 cows, 600 milk producers, housed in two large mechanized stalls. The farm also prepares 15,000 hides annually. Then there are the machine shops for servicing tractors, trucks and combines. Also, there is much fertilization work. On top of all that is a mink and fox farm. All this is done by 500 working members of the 900 residents in the farm community, plus some who live in nearby towns.

Rakveresk, therefore, is able to utilize the full time labor the entire year. Eric Eriit, the 49-year old chairman, must be more than a farmer. He was an agronomist for 11 years and has a staff of agri-industry and other experts. From a turnover of 4,500,000 rubles in 1976, the farm had 1,200,000 rubles clear for distribution to the members, building of homes, a child-care center and other such benefits. The 220 ruble average monthly income was higher than in Soviet farms generally.

At the much larger Vinni state farm, 945 workers take care of 7,500 horned cattle, 2,700 of them milk cows. They have a large plant for production of feed in the form of bricks and pellets from grasses. A state farm is just like a state-owned factory. All are on wages plus bonuses. The farm's population of 5,000 has a community life just like urban workers, in high-rise apartments, electrified, and with all modern amenities, recreation and cultural club, libraries, sport and school provisions. The farm delivered 2,600 tons of meat in that year. The average monthly pay was 229 rubles.

Industrially Estonia went all out for the technological revolution, showing such speed in increases as 60 percent in electronics during the Ninth Five-Year Plan, 70 percent in instrument manufacture, 40 percent in power, 40 percent in dairy and fish. The national income rose 31 percent in the five years. Tõnurist told us an interesting story on development of Estonia's oil-shale industry. It was only a million tons annually before socialism. Now

mechanized, Estonia's miners drove up production to 27 million tons a year, providing the country's energy for power, and certain chemicals and fertilizers. A combine of U.S. business firms, including Standard Oil of Indiana, came to the little republic, so maligned in the U.S. press, with a request to examine whether Colorado's oil shale can produce the kind of results Estonia gets. The U.S. businessmen sent 10,000 tons of Colorado's shale for testing in Estonia. By the end of 1975 34 U.S. firms invited the Soviet oil-shale specialist, Victor Efimov, to address their meeting. There he informed them that Colorado's shale can be economically exploited and his replies were published in the journal of Chemical Engineering.

LITHUANIA

The Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic is most intensely attacked in the U.S. of the three Baltic republics. A relatively larger number of its reactionaries, who tagged along with their nazi masters when the country was liberated, received refuge and cover of their crimes in the U.S. Financed and directed by the Central Intelligence Agency and backed by the U.S. government, which still refuses to recognize the three Baltic states as republics of the USSR, these Lithuanian fascist groups feed the press with charges that the Lithuanians crave for "freedom" from the Soviet "yoke", that Catholicism is suppressed and that the country is becoming "Russified" in language and population.

Hardly more than a glance through Vilnius, Lithuania's 650-year-old capital, will show how brazen the lies are. Not only are Catholic churches open, as seen by people who come in and out of them, but restoration is going on of catholic cathedrals that have long been neglected by previous regimes. In fact, we visited one of non-religious marriage halls where couples came to take their vows without a priest. One innovation is that each of the couple is asked to be alone in separate rooms for a short time to give final thought on going through with the choice. Then the

ceremony. An official of the marriage hall told us that there were actually instances when a couple changed the decision. But directly across the street is a corner Catholic church to which couples desiring a religious service can go.

Just as Soviet peoples everywhere, the Lithuanians today give far more attention to preserving and care of everything that is meaningful in their history.

Russification? More than eighty percent of the 3.4 million population are Lithuanians; 8.6 percent are Russians and 7.7 percent are Poles. As in all of the USSR the second language is Russian, but in book stores and in street book kiosks, Lithuanian is overwhelming. All street and store signs are in Lithuanian. The number of Lithuanian titles published annually would put to shame some West European lands with many times the population.

Lithuanians who migrated to other lands would still recognize Vilnius as they remember it decades back, because the "inner city" is kept intact. They'd even see restoration work of some damaged churches and the 400-year old university library, just as we saw in Tallinn, capital of Estonia and Riga, the capital of Latvia. Yes, they have inner cities in the large USSR cities. But they are not the part of the city, as in the U.S., that is rotting, abandoned, with wooden boards over windows of long-shut stores, with the dilapidated houses left for occupation by impoverished people. On the contrary, the "inner cities" in the Soviet Union are as much as possible kept as they were, in a sense as historic landmarks. There are no slums, no "red-light" districts or skid-row populations in the USSR. But generally there is an outer ring, the "young town" that is built around the old city, where in many cases the majority of the population lives and where many of the industries are closer.

Lithuanians, very much culture conscious, have built a new opera house, styled beautifully to a modern motif by a woman architect, lined inside in brown teakwood, all glass on the outside. We watched a performance of *La Traviata* in Lithuanian. The theater renders year-round performances in Lithuanian.

Most of the residents in "young town" were born around the

period when the country began to go socialist. They are the majority in the new industries in the highly industrialized Lithuania of today. They don't retain much of the old hangovers. They are new families and press hard for all the best that socialism offers, in new homes and higher productivity for higher earnings.

At the offices of the Communist Party leaders gave us a run-down on the changes that have occurred within just 30 short years. There were 616,000 pupils in 1976 in 3,279 general education schools; 59,000 students in 12 institutions of higher learning; 2,600 public libraries and a yearly output of some 2,000 book titles in 15 million copies.

Lithuania learned much from past Soviet experience on collectivization of farming and was able to make rapid headway in that field. While the actual collectivization of the land was completed early, many of the elderly former individual peasants still hung on to their old houses and the average of about a half acre garden plots, to which they are entitled under law. The problem was to induce these *khutoryans* as they were called, to give up their old houses that usually had neither electricity nor drainage, and were far from shopping and other facilities, to move to apartments in the community of the collective farm, enjoy modern facilities and readily available medical care. The second objective was to be able to clear the old houses and roads leading to them, so as to have long stretches of clear fields conducive to more efficient work.

Understandably there was much reluctance at first. The desire to live in an individual house and have a plot of garden land was still strong. Many lived in those old houses for generations. The government offered to buy the houses for a substantial sum, the money to be used by the former owners, partly for a downpayment on an individual house on collective farm community grounds; elderly people could choose to move into a city, where many had sons or daughters. Before long the majority of the *khutoryans* chose one of the alternatives, getting along quite easily on pensions and the 3,500 rubles (on an average) paid for their old houses.

We saw a sample how this works out during a visit to the Leonpolis State Farm, about 75 miles from Vilnius in the village of Dainava, population 800, with about 350 in the work force. With 7,000 acres, 1,900 horned cattle, 650 milk cows, Leonpolis is classed as a middle-sized farm. The tiny villages that were once scattered in the Leonpolis area have been concentrated into two communities, Dainava the center and one at the farthest end called Pitzero. They told us at Dainava that almost all *khutoryans* have been resettled. They pointed to a row of individual new bungalows made available to the resettled people, back of each a garden plot, the right to have chickens, pigs and even one cow, although there is a continual decline of animals on such plots, because milk and meat are plentiful in stores. They are mostly for vegetables, flowers, chickens and rabbits. The center of Dainava, however, is of modern two-storey apartments. The tenants pay around 12 rubles monthly for four rooms plus kitchen, including utilities.

As in all farms we visited in the USSR, milk-maids are among the top wage earners with only the tractor drivers slightly above them. In Leonpolis they averaged 218 rubles in 1975.

In the fast-rising industrial city of Alytus, we saw the partly operational gigantic plant turning out individual pre-fabricated houses. More than 4,000 workers were already working and when completed the number is to rise substantially, with a capacity of producing 4,000 houses annually. We saw the seven-room house and smaller houses, suitable for older couples—plus a half acre—the kind that resettled farmers are offered. There is no pressure on the still remaining *khutoryans* to resettle. But as the new pre-fabs come off in greater number they are more easily induced to move.

One surprise was when plant director Vladas Staponavičius pointing to bundled packs of lumber parts said they are to be exported to the United States. He couldn't specify what part of the U.S. because the importers are only the middle-men. We went through the seven-room house. On the ground was the garage, an adjoining family room with a large barbecue-fireplace. On the next floor was a large living room, dining room, kitchen

and all sorts of lumber built-ins and two bathrooms. On the top floor were three spacious bedrooms. On the outside, brick facing over lumber with stone along the bottom. Staponavičius estimated the cost of the house about 21,000 rubles (about \$30,000 on 1976 exchange) a very big bargain at U.S. prices of homes.

LATVIA

Visiting the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic our hosts escorted us first to Salaspils, the site of the largest concentration camp set up by the nazis, in which 100,000 Latvians, Russians, Czechs and Byelorussians, among them a high percentage Jews, were exterminated. As we walked along the road many thousands trod to their death, guides told us of the horrid details of the seven thousand children starved to death. The memorial is unique in form—high concrete figures, symbolizing the victims, stand like shadows. We saw a march of children, who passed by a space built to mark such remembrance, and each laid a flower. This is a daily routine, we were told, so the horrors of fascism would never be forgotten.

Latvia, with about 25,000 square miles is as big as Belgium and the Netherlands combined, although with a fraction of their population—just 2,500,000. Hence much effort in making every one in its workforce count. It is industrially among the foremost areas of the USSR. Latvia stands high in electronics, electric train construction, furniture, radio, television, machinery, textiles, washing machines electric bulbs, bus, bicycle, agricultural machinery, diesel engines, precision instruments, various medicines and vitamins as well as many other products. When socialism came, Latvia had 250,000 small individual, mostly very poor, farm holdings. Today they are concentrated into 403 modern mechanized collective farms and 203 state farms. Latvia also has a big fishing and fish processing industry. We visited a collective of fishermen.

Riga with 800,000 population, twice pre-war, is ringed by new avenues with high-rise garden apartments. Its history runs to the

12th century, and as you walk through its narrow cobblestoned streets in old town, some so narrow a truck can barely squeeze through, one sees much that is about as old. Mayor M. Ya. Dubra told us that between 1941 and 1961 800,000 square meters of housing was built. But today 400,000 square meters are built in just one year. The city was planning a subway with construction of the first seven-mile, 15-station section in preparation. At present the city has a surface electric train that takes outer ring residents into the heart of old town. It connected us with the inner city from Yurmala, the miles-long beach where we stayed. More than 40,000 are served in child-care centers, and there are seven theatres, to mention just two of the indicators the mayor gave of the city's progress. After he finished, I thought of a half dozen cities in the U.S. with comparative population and how puny they look by comparison in terms of transportation, health care, child care, culture, recreation and sport facilities.

Especially interesting in Latvia was the fishermen's collective. The 9th of May Collective was not the traditional small fishing village. It has a membership of 1,500, of whom 500 do fishing with 17 large vessels. Some go as far as the Atlantic but most sail the Baltic and North Seas. The rest of the workforce is involved in operating the automated canning establishment, constructing houses, ship and machinery repair, making fish nets, administrative affairs. There is even a shop of eight persons who repair and service ship radios and TV sets.

"What you see," said G. Saltais, chairman of the collective, "was built with our own power." He took us to a big shop tooled to make ship parts. The canning plant, in which some 200, mostly women, work, was built by the construction team of the collective. Saltais observed that the 9th of May is not the largest of the fish collectives. At least four others are larger.

The residential section of the collective looked like a development of garden houses. Running four stories, the apartment units were built by the collective. They usually add a unit every year. We visited several of the apartments. They are an improve-

ment over many in cities. One apartment, for example, had three large rooms plus a kitchen and a stairway to an upper floor with two bedrooms and bathroom. The rent was 33 rubles for a family of five, including utilities. The collective has all the comforts of an advanced community, cultural, child care, etc. The children are bussed to school in a nearby town.

As we looked over one of the fishing vessels, an elderly man named Johann Mejak struck our attention because he looked so much like the weather-beaten "man of the sea". He had been fishing since 1914. What was it like for a fisherman in those days? Mejak replied, "In those days, one sometimes had to row the boat." He is now on pension, works as a ship watchman, and is a respected member of the collective.

The Lenin State Farm of 660 workers, producing mainly livestock, milk, vegetables and fruit, on 10,000 acres, presented much the same picture of mechanized farms as seen in Estonia and Lithuania. One point of interest there was the stress the director put on the back-to-the-farm trend among many young people. It is mainly due to the provision of good apartments and a more fruitful cultural life with the construction, by the farm's building team, of a beautiful cultural palace with an auditorium seating 400.

The problem of holding on to workers was also illustrated at the Ogra Textile and Knitwear plant, employing 6,100 workers, 70 percent women, average age 24. The giant complex does everything from the threading of synthetics and wool, on through weaving, printing and manufacture of women's and children's clothes. The plant uses mostly automated equipment. The manager pointed out that because of the nature of the workforce, the large number of child-care centers and health care facilities for women are an essential factor in the plant's employment policy. But only 3,500 of the employees live in homes of the enterprise. The rest commute. Some from long distances. The provision of more housing is key to holding on to many workers. A thousand young women live in dormitories of the plant. That affects their marriage plans, hence job prospects.

UKRAINE

In the Ukraine, the second largest of the Soviet Republics, we visited Kiev, the capital, and the Lvov district, the westernmost area of the USSR. Larger than France in territory and its population of 50 million about the same, the Ukraine far surpasses it industrially and in most other respects. At its industry exhibit in Kiev the economic score, as of conclusion of the Ninth Five-Year Plan, was 89 times the pre-Revolution level. It would have taken several days, more time than we had, to just go through the many industry halls, to get an appreciation of the Ukraine's economic development—aircraft, automobile, tractor and other agri-machinery, electronics, numerous types of machine manufacture, coal and iron ore mining, oil, locomotives, buses and even artificial diamonds. Also, as even in pre-Revolution days, the Ukraine is a big supplier of the USSR's agricultural products.

Communist Party leaders put strong emphasis on the figures showing the Ukraine's achievements in the 60 years since the Revolution. In 1917, when France, as the United States and other of the major capitalist countries, boasted of high literacy and their seats of science, the population of the Ukraine was almost 70 percent illiterate. Today every second Ukrainian has either a higher or middle (high school) education. Currently, 17 million persons, a third of the population, is in some school from general education to college or other institutes. At present the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences unites research institutes staffed by 35,000 persons. The Ukraine's workers in the scientific research institutes totals more than 175,000. The Ukrainians, called "little Russians" in czarist times, were a suppressed nationality until the Revolution. After 1917, the Ukraine was not fully stabilized for several years, until the last of the foreign-backed resistance was liquidated. When the Nazi invasion came, the Ukraine was overrun earliest and longest under occupation and suffered the greatest destruction. I need hardly repeat here the well-known facts—hundreds of thousands of skilled workers died in the war or in Nazi death camps. It took years to reha-

bilitate the land, to rebuild the many cities that were almost levelled, notably Kiev. But the Ukraine rose the second time with a vigor the capitalist world had never known. And that vigor was no less on development of the country's culture. The Ukraine publishes annually eight to nine thousand book titles with an average circulation of 150 million. Published also are more than 2,000 newspapers and 518 periodical journals. The republic has 77 full-time stage theaters, six of them operas, 25 philharmonic orchestras, hundreds of dance and choral ensembles, thousands of cultural clubs and palaces.

A day-long tour through Kiev, now of more than two million people, gave some indication of the Ukrainian power of reconstruction and advance. It is a city of many hundreds of high garden apartment buildings, usually of from 12 to 16 stories. The Dnieper River, running through the city, divides into several channels, creating island-like sections, many with nearby beaches and parks. Kiev is one of the greenest cities in the world. Much restoration work was done of old landmarks. The city's famed broad avenue, the Kreshchatik, running through its downtown, retains all its old beauty and character. One end of the avenue looks out on a vast valley panorama of the Dnieper, new housing, industries and the 900-year old Kiev-Pechersky Monastery, which is now a museum. The monastery is intact as it was, with its long catacombs of cubicles of dried up mummies of "saints". Thousands visit daily to see the falsehood of past church claims and exploitation of beliefs that the saints' bodies did not decompose.

LVOV

Of special interest was the trip to the Lvov region. Like the Baltic republics the Lvov region of 2,500,000 population was reunited with the Ukraine and entered the socialist system in 1944,¹ when the nazis were driven out. But already in De-

¹ The Lvov region set out on the road to socialist transformation in 1939, when, after the occupation of Poland by fascist Germany at the outset of World War II, the Western Ukraine, at the request of the working people, entered the USSR, and was joined to the Ukrainian

cember 1944, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR decided to turn Lvov and vicinity into a major industrial area of the USSR. All the advantages were there—anthracite coal, oil, gas and other natural resources plus a mild climate. The decisions set into motion a rush of help to Lvov from the industrial centers of the USSR. They sent material, equipment, scientists, technicians, skilled labor. That combined with the high spirit in the Lvov region because it was reunited with its motherland and tasted peace after centuries of bloody warfare and subjugation to a succession of invaders.

My interest in Lvov was mainly to get an idea of the "secret" that made it exemplary not alone for its pace of industrial development, but for its success in achieving higher quality, one of the major guidelines for the Tenth Five-Year Plan. For many years, as the Soviet Union drove towards achieving a high production level, productivity and quantity of production was the prime objective. In recent years, increasing attention was directed to higher quality. Some industries and cities drew special attention for innovations in controls and checks on production to ensure a higher quality. The problem is not just simple inspection. It varies from industry to industry, but production of sub-standard products is made more difficult by the piece-work system that prevails widely.

It seems ironic that the Lvov area should be an experimental ground for such problems. Before 1939, 84 percent of Lvov industries had fewer than five employees at an establishment. About 60 percent was agricultural. Of 303,000 peasant households in the area, 47,000 had less than one hectare (2.2 acres) and 124,000 had from one to three hectares. Nearly half of the households didn't have a horse. The majority of the population were illiterate. In higher education, only 11 percent were Ukrainians and 82 percent were Poles.

The area was under the domination of the Polish bourgeois regime between the First and Second world wars. The picture

SSR. The socialist development of the Western Ukraine, interrupted by the war, was renewed in 1944, after its liberation by the Soviet Army.—Ed.

was about the same in health, culture and in other fields. In just one week, we were told, the Lvov region produces 50 times the output of the last pre-war year. In just one day the Lvov region turns out 40,000 tons of coal, 49 buses, 2,000 color TV sets, 40,000 pairs of shoes, 60 forklifts and 227 tons of confectionary products. In agriculture, all the tiny peasant farms are united in only 303 large collective farms and 43 state farms.

Almost a third of the population is undergoing some type of education, from the nearly 400,000 children in general schools to 120,000 in higher institutes, the rest in an assortment of night schools and occupational improvement courses and such.

Following several hours of conference with the very dynamic V. F. Dobrik, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the district, we visited the gigantic bus works, the Electron TV plant, the Progress shoe plant and a motorcycle factory. Those are just a small portion of the area industries. Automatic cranes, household lamps, electronic tubes, instruments of all types, chemicals and many more are among the products. Along with such vigor in pressing the technological revolution, Lvov, a 700-year old city of 650,000, is also strict in preserving the "inner" old city, the narrow, cobble-stoned streets, the ancient churches and every landmark that tells something of the past. Most of the real city, its wide boulevards, modern homes, gardens, new shopping centers, new plants and institutions are Lvov's outer ring. They, too, are talking of a metro or some surface rapid transit.

Aside from my own technological limitations, I wouldn't attempt, in this limited space, to treat fully what we saw in the plants on "quality controls". But V.F. Dobrik put it this way:

"We worked out a system of measuring and checking all occupations to the last assembly. This system of examinations has been approved by the Committee of Standards of the USSR. We are working out our own system with more rigid rules for controlling quality than the national standards." He pointed out that in the past examination was limited to a checkup on a product

when it was completed. If there were defects, it was difficult, or impossible, to fix the responsibility. So in all plants we visited, we were shown all sort of checks on parts and at stages of the assembly that makes it possible to pin-point a defect and the worker responsible.

At the shoe plant, for example, director Vladimir Schutick said, "While in the past we were controlling only the total product, now we know which worker did any part any day." He said the plant employs 147 workers on checking of quality, in addition to people in laboratories, who check on the quality of material. At the large bus plant, director Alexander Sled said: "Now we set standards for every part. Every individual worker must know what he or she does." Most interesting, but very complicated, was the system at the Electron TV plant. There director Petrovsky demonstrated the operation of an electronic system arranged to make possible the detection of a faulty part within seconds. This is done through a plantwide TV screen of a system that makes possible a filed card record of every part that is kept for three years and could be checked to trace a faulty part, as well as the worker. In addition to the check system, which Petrovsky said is working very well, he explained how the Lvov 40 percent bonus system works. All workers are entitled to the 40 percent. But, the worse the quality of the worker's turnout, the more of the extra 40 percent is lost.

Notwithstanding the check and bonus system, E. D. Fedorov, Secretary of the Communist Party unit in Electron said: "The starting point is the upbringing of the worker." He observed the average age of the employees of the plant is 25. The procedure is to admit the new young workers into teams of experienced workers. The young people are also encouraged to be innovators and many do bring scientific-technological progress. He also called attention to Electron's services to the workers, pointing to the 1,200 seat dining room that is like a banquet hall, the provision of adequate living quarters and the plant's vacation resorts along the Black Sea. It's a combination of all the factors, he stressed—the technical ways, the pay incentive and the better life of the plant community which encourages high quality.

As in other areas, I visited a worker's home, on invitation of Mikhail Litin, employed at the bus plant for 20 years. Unlike more than half of Lvov's workers, who had already been transferred to new apartments, Litin lived in midtown in an old apartment. He said he preferred it, because he has more space in it, 56 square meters. The family had a very large living room, a large bedroom, a smaller one for their daughters and a large kitchen, the latter's space not counted. It was well fixed up. As Mrs. Litin laid out an overgenerous supper, Litin told me he started at the plant at 115 to 120 rubles a month in 1960. Now he gets 220 to 230. Both he and his wife told of the benefits outside the pay envelope without cost. Their older daughter is a student at a technical institute at no cost and is paid a monthly stipend. They anticipate their younger daughter would have the same in later years. Every year the family goes to the union's vacation resort at only 30 percent of the very low nominal price.

Litin casually let it drop, when I asked him if he has any hobbies, that he was a lightweight boxer. He said that in 99 matches he won by a knockout 23 times and was floored only twice. He was floored the third time by his wife when he got married, on demand he stop boxing.

Mrs. Litin nudged him to show me some of his citations. He brought out a pile of them. There were citations earned during his boxing career, then when he became leader of pioneer groups and several citations for production, among them medals.

THE CAUCASUS

For a happy combination of the onrush of the technological revolution and unspoiled beauties of nature, the mountainous lands of the Caucasus are the places to visit. We were in Georgia, Armenia and the autonomous republic of Abkhazia within Georgia. The Caucasus is also a mosaic of numerous nationalities, for centuries a crossroad of Christian, Islamic, Roman,

Mongol and other invaders. Victoria Sigadze, Secretary of the Communist Party of Georgia, whom we interviewed, observed that in Georgia schools teach in seven languages, depending on the need of the national groups in a community. The Caucasus also provides an ideal ground for study how socialism, while strongly encouraging the identity, national pride and self-determination of peoples, also wipes out centuries-old hostility among peoples and unites them for progress and improvement of life for all.

Enver Kalba, Secretary of Georgia's trade unions of 2,100,000 members, described the relationship between peoples as follows: "I am an Abkhazian. We are a small minority—100,000—but that doesn't in any way affect my position as a leader of the Georgian labor movement of more than two million." He added that one of his brothers is married to a Jewish woman and a second brother to a woman of Islamic origin. The process has also gone far on liberation of women in an area where conditions for centuries were much like those in mid-Asia. This struck me first by the fact that Mrs. Sigadze is one of the secretaries of the Communist Party of Georgia.

GEORGIA

Georgia's industrial production is now 80 times the level of 1920, said Mrs. Sigadze. Until 1921, when the country entered the socialist era, the overwhelming majority of Georgians were illiterate. Some of the national groups in Georgia didn't even have an alphabet or any written form of their language. Illiteracy has been wiped out and Russian, the second language for all, is spoken fluently everywhere, a uniting force and a strong factor in speeding technical-scientific education.

As an example of the way the process worked, we visited a large calculator manufacturing plant in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, where 3,000 workers are on production, plus 1,000 in the engineering staff and 700 young people as trainees. Chief engineer Ottas

Tvakharia told us that the plant makes calculating equipment for any industry that operates a continual production process: "The essence of our work is to apply science to production." This may seem almost unthinkable to some Americans who on occasion see Georgians only as dancers. But it was as true as life as we walked through the departments, past rows of all sorts of technical devices, watching mostly young men and women at work. We were told they were of dozens of nationalities of the Caucasus and other parts of the USSR.

But we were yet to see more along that line. A 25-kilometer bus trip along a scenic mountainous road brought us to Rustavi, Georgia's steel center, where 9,000 workers and two thousand technicians and in other services turn out rolled steel and tubes. Rustavi is a brand-new city, one of the 1,151 new cities added to Soviet geography in 60 years. Its planned layout and construction of the steel plant began in 1944. Now with a population of 125,000 with an average age 29, everything in Rustavi is new. It's like a garden city. You drive down tree-lined Friendship Prospect along blocks of eight-storey apartments with new stores. The entrance to the Rustavi steel plant is a plaza with a water fountain surrounded by well-cared for plants.

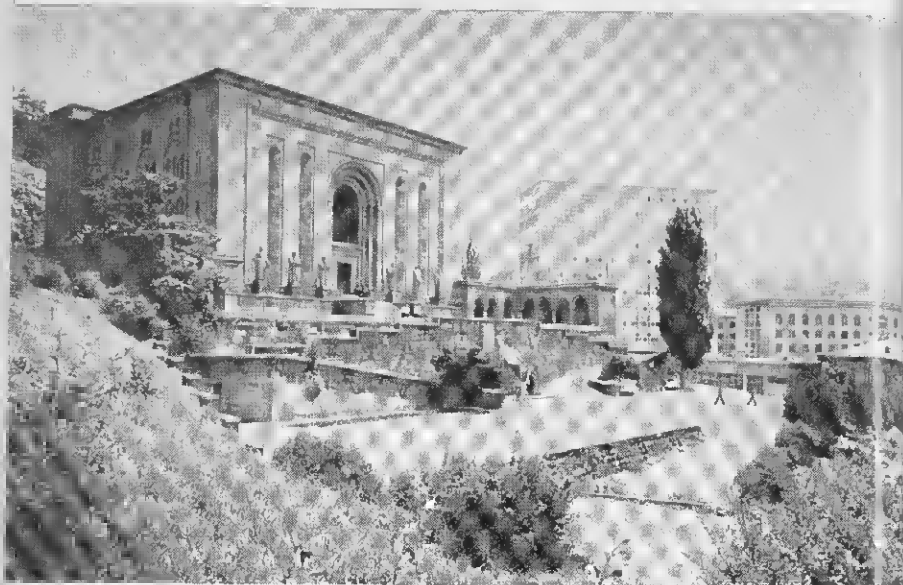
Chief Engineer Manuka Mindeli who escorted us through some of the giant plant's 40 divisions, said, "We did not have our own skilled workers and specialists when we started. The Soviet republics, responding to the call of the Communist Party of the USSR, helped us. Many young people came here. We now have 40 nationalities in the plant."

Mindeli had reference to the usual calls by the Komsomol to its members to rally where new projects are under way. Thousands respond for the construction work and many stay on as production workers and settlers in the new locations.

The plant now produces everything from pig iron to the finished product—tubes up to a diameter of 20 inches. In 1976 the plant turned out 700,000 tons of coke, 800,000 tons of pig iron, 1,500,000 tons of steel and 1,300,000 tons of tubes. Much of the plant's operations are automated. We saw how the complex machinery discharges steel poles to a belt line that passes them hot



The Shopping Center in Sochi



Matenadaran, an institute for the study of ancient manuscripts in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia

to automatic boring which turns them into tubes. The Rustavi workers enjoy all the protections and benefits of which steel workers are assured in the USSR generally. The plant has two sanatoriums for health improvement and vacation rest. Each of 40 plant divisions has a dining room, well serviced and clean, serving hot lunches for just 30 kopeks. The furnace workers we watched at work can retire, if they desire, at age 50, but the overwhelming majority choose to stay on and draw both their pensions and full pay.

Young people predominate in the plant. Doing lighter work are 2,500 women. The plant's institute turns out 500 occupational specialists annually. The youth of the city of Rustavi is reflected by the 16,000 members in the Komsomol compared to 11,000 Communist Party members. At the City Soviet (city hall) Renard Georgadze told us that the city's population is 50 percent Georgian, 22 percent Russian. More than 3,000 of the plant's workers were given newly-built apartments. Some still live in nearby villages. An apartment in the new buildings we saw, was of three rooms and a kitchen plus all utilities, rents for 16 rubles per month. Another home we visited of a 51-year old gas worker whose five-room cottage, including a garage for his car, costs just 15 rubles monthly.

ABKHAZIA

Abkhazia's main wealth and economic base is its semi-tropical climate and resorts along 150 miles of beautiful Black Sea shoreline that attracts 2.5 million vacationers annually. Only about 100,000 Abkhazians live in their original homeland. Many others are scattered in other lands. But they are the major influence in the republic of 500,000 over an area of about 3,500 square miles.

Ovantendel Sakvarimidze, head of Abkhazia's Council of Ministers, told us that before socialism came to the area it had only 60 persons known to have a higher education. There were just three books in print in the Abkhazian language, with a circula-

tion of 3,000. Today there are 2,000 teachers in the country's schools and a chain of institutes staffed by over 1,000. Abkhazia boasts of 15 doctors of science, 400 candidates of science, 2,500 engineers, 2,000 agronomists and more than 10,000 persons in medicine. Abkhazia has developed some industry, but it is mostly related to supplying the tremendous vacation and health services and its farms, some of which are of citrus and tea.

Pitsunda, built 10 years ago, is Abkhazia's largest seashore complex. It consists of seven 14-storey units a total of 2,800 rooms, with all the dining, health and play facilities one may wish. As most of the resorts in the USSR, they are under trade union direction. Touring the resort we noted a large number of non-Soviet people. We were informed that a substantial part of Pitsunda's sunshine and beach is "exported"—by contract arrangement it is leased for the summer months until October, for use by Belgians and Finns whose countries don't have an abundance of sunshine and beaches.

Abkhazia also boasts of the world's largest monkey farm and research center with more than 2,000 of all types of monkeys. The director of the center told us the farm has exchange relations on studies with some 40 countries.

A day at Abkhazia's largest collective farm—of 12,000 acres with a population of 6,500 in nine settlements in its territory, was very interesting. We saw operation of tractor-based tea pickers that shaved the ready leaves off the top. But for top-quality tea they still use hand pickers.

An attraction for about a million persons annually are the Novy-Aphon Caves discovered in 1961. An electric railway through an underground tunnel of more than a kilometer takes visitors to the nine caves, some of which are big enough to accommodate a stadium. Guides take the visitors through the well-lighted walkways among the multi-colored formations.

At the tea farm, we had an opportunity to meet and interview one of the 19,000 centenarians registered in the USSR's 1970 census, a large number of them in Abkhazia. He was Timur Vanacha, aged 110, who was introduced by farm director Alkiva Ayva as among "the younger ones". He is the soloist in Abkha-

zia's Chorus of Centenarians. Vanacha was in the Czar's cavalry during World War I, still wears high boots, a red shirt and carakul hat. He said he owes his long life to continual work, light eating and only an occasional drink of vodka.

Memorable was a trip to legendary Lake Ritza, high up in the mountains, clear as spring water, a huge basin in mountainous beauty. It brought memories of Lake Tahoe between California and Nevada of several decades back when it, too, was clear. In recent years it became a happy hunting ground for real estate sharks and figured in pollution scandals. Earlier in our trip to Armenia, we visited and had a boat ride in the similarly large clear mountain Lake Sevan, which is also a major power supply.

ARMENIA

Every Soviet republic has its own characteristics, but Armenia is probably most different. Picturesque in its own way, it has an older history than the others, having marked Yerevan's 2,705th anniversary several years ago. Armenians also boast of a high-level industrial development. We visited recently installed Byurakan Observatory, they said is the largest in the world.

Entering Yerevan, a city of a million population, one is struck by the predominantly rosewood color of its buildings. The country is blessed with a stone that has served Armenia's builders for centuries. They do wonders with it—cut it in building blocks, use it for columns, arches, monuments, sculptures. Yerevan's big central square towards which front the major administration buildings, the trade unions and stores, is a panorama of such colored stone varying only in shade.

You sense an exceptionally strong national pride in the Armenians. It seems to be very much based on their ability to survive centuries of subjugation, including, they estimate, the massacre of 1,500,000 by the Turkish Ottoman Empire in World War I days. Only the Armenians on the Russian side of the Turkish boundary escaped the slaughter and lived to build a socialist

land. Guests are urged to visit Matenadaran Institute where a collection of books in the Armenian language and religious writings dating as far back as the fourth century are evidence of their long history. Officials of the institute told me that they were steadily receiving donations of such historic material from Armenians scattered throughout the world, including many in America. Their study and preservation in the Matenadaran archives is considered most secure and practical.

Thousands of Armenians from all over the world visit Soviet Armenia annually. Most have emigrated to escape Turkish oppression and massacres, and settled in other lands for three generations. Many of the visitors depart with the remark "we live elsewhere but our hearts are here". An estimated thousand Armenians a year return to live the remainder of their lives in the socialist country.

Armenia is very stony, and more than 90 percent of its territory is over 1,000 meters above sea-level. Its agriculture is only 13 percent of the economy. We did, however, visit its big Lenin Farm, where we saw fruit of high quality and the grapes that are a base for its cognac industry. The major emphasis in Armenia's economy are its industries, electronics, instruments and machine manufacturing plants. After visiting some of its manufacturing plants we were guests at Yerevan's big cognac plant. A woman official escorted us through the works, and told us, as we went along, of the plant's history and the technology of producing cognac. Finally we landed in a gigantic subterranean section amidst rows of hundreds of massive barrels in storage. They were not empty and each had a notation when filled and when to be emptied.

Our attention was drawn, however, to a corner where a group of barrels carried the notation filled in 1967, "to be opened on the Soviet Union's 100th anniversary in the year 2017". We could only imagine the taste of 50-year old cognac. Soon after we were escorted to the top floor of a building, the tasting room. In a demonstration of the taste of cognac of different ages, we were escalated only as far as age 20.

Standing on high ground in Yerevan one can see a peaceful

pastoral scene at the foot of Mt. Ararat of biblical fame. The snow-capped peak, clearly visible, is on the Turkish side. Not far away are the noisy modern industrial plants of Armenia.

With a population of three million, Armenia has 700,000 children in schools and there are 13 colleges with 54,000 students. There are today 10,200 doctors compared with just 73 before World War I. New towns, as everywhere in the USSR, surrounded the old ones. Culture and the performing arts are at a high level. The country has 1,300 public libraries with more than 25 million books, 14 professional and 25 people's theaters in addition to the many of the amateur type.

ZHIGULIS AND KAMAZ

The immense Volga basin is dotted today with many of the USSR's industries, the major ones among them tractor and the fast-rising auto and auto parts plants. They stretch from Gorky down to Volgograd. A most interesting visit was to Togliatti's VAZ turning out 667,000 Zhiguli cars annually and the KAMAZ works in Naberezhnye Chelny on Volga's tributary the Kama River. The latter was not completed but was partly in operation on super-powered trucks, running then at a rate of about 22,000 annually. In July, 1977 at the time of the visit of Naberezhnye Chelny, in the Tatar Autonomous Republic, Technical Director Anatoly Vlahov said: "KAMAZ construction is running ahead of plan and the annual goal of 150,000 trucks and 250,000 of the powerful engines will be reached before the end of the Tenth Five-Year Plan."

In a sense, my journeys to the plants were a revisit of the Volga basin after the trip almost a half century back during the ground-breaking for the first auto plant near Gorky. What a difference in the half century!

The first steamshovel at Chelny began operation in 1970. By 1977 the major assembly units were up and in partial operation. The sleepy little Chelny of 27,000 people sprang up to a population of 270,000 with all the people housed in units with all

modern conveniences, ranging from five to 17 storeys, a panorama of 66 square miles with hundreds of cranes at work on more houses and more plant units. Gazing on the scene, one wonders how all this was possible in so short a time.

At the time of the visit 45,000 workers of 70 nationalities were already on production with a workforce of 83,000 expected by the time full capacity is achieved. Mayor Ryzhovich of the city said he expects a population of 400,000 before long. "We are now getting about 11,000 births a year," he said.

Going through the plant units in operation you see only the beginnings of what was in full stride a year earlier at the Togliatti plant—thousands of men and women, mostly young, at work.

The average age, said Vlahov, is 25, 40 percent women. They work in teams (brigades) as in USSR plants generally. A calm atmosphere seemed to prevail. There was no rush or hustle-bustle. The young people seem to be learning to get into the swing along the half-mile assembly line. To judge by their age most couldn't have had much experience or long training. But at the end of the line, finished super-sized trucks came off at the rate of 100 a day. KAMAZ trucks are seen rolling on many roads in the USSR.

How did KAMAZ get its labor supply for much of the construction work as well as for operation of the plant? The "usual" way: when a big project like KAMAZ gets under way the Komsomol issued a call and thousands came in. The plants already in operation in the industry, like the auto plants of Moscow, Minsk, Gorky and Togliatti, contributed some of their technicians and skilled workers who became the key experienced force around whom the young newcomers were trained and developed. Even many who come in for construction work stay. Young people are attracted for a number of reasons; they like to pioneer for big objectives, they see faster training and promotion possibilities, sooner allotment of an apartment, hence sooner marriage and families, if they are not already newlyweds. The shortage of labor in the USSR makes provision of such opportunities a must

to obtain and hold on to workers. Also, for such key plants like KAMAZ there is a priority in hurrying provision of housing services and cultural-recreational opportunities.

An example was a visit to the home of a young couple, KAMAZ production workers who live on the 12th floor in two bedrooms, a living room, all large, and a kitchen that is two to three times as big as kitchens I saw in many Moscow homes. In front of the building is a large play area for children and an adjoining sport ground with provisions for basket-ball and games for older children. The rent of such an apartment for the family of four, including utilities, is 22 rubles a month. The family's small child gets full-day care with four meals at a nearby child-care center for 10 rubles a month. The center is spotlessly clean and well equipped like all child-care centers across the USSR with cots for afternoon naps, playthings, etc. The child can be taken to the center as early as 6 A.M. and stay as late as 7 P.M.

One form of training is sending young people to work for a period in the older auto or auto parts plants. The soviet widespread and very fruitful *nastavnichestvo* system speeds the process. It is the practice of assignment of young newcomers to a place of work, under the guidance of an experienced worker. And, there are all sorts of occupational schools without cost.

Soviet technology made possible provision of plant equipment of USSR manufacture. But there were also many machines with non-Soviet labels. In the interest of speed even some machines, although also made in the USSR, may be imported from capitalist countries, among them the U.S. The Western firms are today vying for orders from the Soviet Union. But most striking were the many labels of socialist lands' firms on KAMAZ equipment, a good illustration how CMEA (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) of the socialist countries works. The effect of such exchange relations is to eliminate much wasteful duplication on certain products or even needless construction of certain plants that may duplicate. I watched a young woman weighing about 90 pounds feeding a huge stamping machine about three storeys in height. A metal plate identified the machine a product

of Czechoslovakia. Such cooperation is now becoming a major factor in the advancement of the economy of the CMEA countries to a level of more than one-third of world industrial production.

TOGLIATTI

The Togliatti VAZ plant visited a year earlier gave a preview of what KAMAZ would be like when completed and running at capacity. Construction of the Togliatti complex of five plants, the world's largest such auto manufacturing system complete in one location, began in January 1967. On Dec. 21, 1973, the millionth car came off the line. Since then, 667,000 Zhigulis have been rolling off the line every year. The plants have 90 miles of conveyor lines. VAZ is also very young in composition of its workers. The average age in the main assembly building of more than 23,000 workers is 23. For the 80,000 workers the average age is 26. The manager of the big metal building is 33. I saw a young woman, apparently in her mid-twenties, at the controls of a big complex automation control board.

Naturally, I was interested in the question of forced speedup. At the time the United States had some strikes at auto plants over the intolerable speedup and other bad conditions. It was also a time when there was much talk of "human rights". In auto plants of the U.S. there is very little consideration for the human rights of the workers. At the VAZ plant, however, they have a system to at least make the work of assembly workers as tolerable as possible and least monotonous. The speed of the line is set by mutual agreement with the union. At the start in the morning the pace of the line is slower, gaining speed gradually. Every two hours the conveyor stops for five minutes during which the workers can rest, talk or go to the rest room. The line slows close to lunch and stops for an hour. The line also slows towards the end of the shift, when the music piped in is usually the slower classical type. The workers have considerable rest or play-time during lunch. The VAZ complex has 30 dining

rooms of 1,100 places each. All 33,000 workers on a shift eat at the same time. They give their choice of the menu a day in advance. The meal, which costs 40 kopeks, is before them when they sit down and after 15 or 20 minutes they have the rest of the hour to themselves—to read, watch a film in the union's clubroom in each department or walk along the outside gardenlike promenade.

One of the 1,100-seat dining rooms set just before lunchtime looked like a banquet setting, clean and well set up. The plant is very spacious. No dangerous hanging auto parts floating overhead. Isles between rows of machines are wide enough for trucks. A young woman driving a small power-driven sweeper goes over the isles periodically.

Five hundred air conditioners provide cool air in summer and warm air in winter. A control room conditions the air to suit hot departments or areas that need more heat at certain times.

Transportation is arranged to suit the shifts. Buses bring workers from Avtograd, the newly-built city where they live, in about ten or fifteen minutes. When the first shift workers pour out homeward, the buses are there to take them home without delay. Similarly for the second shift that ends 12:30 A.M. Thus there is no need to fight early morning traffic driving to work or the same homeward. Nor the usual long trips and long waits.

As all new residential areas, Avtograd in Togliatti, population 120,000, was laid out in squares called "micro" areas. Each square of the city has all the basic stores, child centers, schools, etc., services a community needs, with the major department stores and such on the main streets between the micro-areas. The arrangement of a school in each micro-area is to minimize the necessity for children to cross major streets. The apartments rent at four to five percent of wages, and conditions of life are basically like those introduced later in KAMAZ. A general education school we visited with 1,350 students and a staff of 57, was of well equipped chemical, mechanical, electrical and communication laboratories, with studios for the arts and domestic science. For older students there was an auto engine they learn to take apart and put together.

A dental clinic with 11 chairs services 24,000 patients annually. A new sport palace is used as a skating-rink, for basketball and hockey games. The plant also has a number of sport and vacation resorts for its workers, also pioneer camps nearby on the banks of the Volga. The plant director observed there is little turnover in plant employment. In large measure this is due to the conditions of life that Avtograd ensures its residents.

THROUGH SIBERIA¹

Hundreds of thousands, the overwhelming majority of young people, are turning eastward to Siberia's towns or settling newly-founded cities rising across the vast stretches of hardly exploited lands. They are conquering the cold and the long untouched wilds, uncovering Siberia's fabulous wealth—a tremendous reserve for socialist construction.

I visited Novosibirsk, Siberia's most populous city, located in the heart of its Western fast-expanding industrial district, and the Far East maritime region along the Pacific Coast. Despite the advice of people of the need of winter wear we experienced very warm weather in both areas. Watching the Novosibirsk May Day parade we were very much sunburned. Hardly any of the spectators or marchers wore even a jacket. As for the trip to Vladivostok, snowflakes fell on Moscow's airport in mid-September on departure. Nine hours and nine time-zones later we arrived in warm sunny Vladivostok. During my stay in the region people were bathing in the Pacific waters. Much of Siberia isn't so terrifying to people who fear cold. Large parts are hardly colder than the northern states in the United States. Novosibirsk has a population of 1,300,000. Omsk, also like Novosibirsk in West Siberia, a small town in 1917, now has over a million people. A dozen Siberian cities have a half million or more population and many more are nearing that level. But Siberia, 1.5 times

¹ By Siberia the author means the entire Asian USSR, that is, Siberia proper and the Soviet Far East.—Ed.

the size of the U.S., is mostly very cold. Some of the major projects that have been built, or like the 3,200 kilometer Baikal-Amur Mainline [BAM] railroad under construction, are in permafrost zones with winter temperatures dropping to below 40-50 degrees Centigrade. The heroism and courage of the masses of people, at least 75 percent young men and women, who respond to the call of the Communist Party and Komsomol for work on these projects, can hardly be overestimated. The 800,000 Komsomol members working on BAM have been laying tracks through land never trod by man, cutting miles of tunnel and bridging many wide streams. By 1978 these pioneer builders settled more than 40 newly-born urban type towns along BAM's course. That's how the Krasnoyarsk hydroelectric station, the world's biggest, and the big Bratsk and Ust-Ilimsk stations were built. That's how new oil, coal and gas industries and cities sprung up in the Arctic regions.

Interviewing Dr. Venyamin Alexeyev, Deputy Director of Science of the Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy of the Siberian Department of the USSR's Academy of Sciences, I asked what draws young people in such great numbers to Siberia. Among the reasons he gave are "romanticism", youth's desire to see and travel, independence from parents, the ease of getting new homes for newlyweds, because of rapid provision of new housing parallel with the work on projects. Wages, he noted, run at least 15 percent above the rates in the European section of the USSR and in colder areas as high as double those rates. He also stressed the natural desire of the youths to build and see their achievements.

In an interview a year earlier Konstantin Mohortov, director of BAM construction, when he attended the 25th CPSU Congress, in February 1976, said there were already then 22 new cities along the line, with a population of 60,000 among them 9,000 children born there. He said there were already then apartment houses, child-care centers, schools, cultural clubs and stores. "We have people from every district and every republic," he said. "There is widespread intermarriage of Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Moldavians and others."

Alexeyev, thumbing through one of the books he wrote on electrification of Siberia, cited tables listing the nationality composition of the workers on Siberia's major construction jobs. He noted 53 nationalities on Bratsk, 36 on Krasnoyarsk, 52 on Ust-Ilimsk and such others. Out of such unity for pioneering socialist construction, develops a hardy, fearless people totally free of racial or national prejudices.

In the very interesting discussion with Dr. Alexeyev at his institute in Akademgorodok (Science City) in Novosibirsk's outer ring, I observed that the United States, too, has a history of pioneering with a westward march and more recently with a rush to Alaska to exploit its oil discoveries. Also, that the U.S. westward march was by conquest of territory that left a trail of Native Indian dead and seizure of large Mexican arcas; that Native Indians are still relegated in reservations to starvation standards, their productive land seized; and that the current oil invasion in Alaska brought sharp protests from the Native Eskimos for seizure of their lands and for polluting the country with a "civilization" of narcotic addiction, prostitution, crime, diseases hitherto unknown, and violation of the natural environment. We questioned if there are such experiences in Siberia.

"Oh, there is nothing like that here," exclaimed Dr. Alexeyev. He described how Soviet industrial development is welcomed in Yakutia and Buryatia, through which BAM runs and how Soviet policy has advanced the peoples of the many nationalities in Siberia. "Illiteracy has been wiped out long ago in these arcas," he went on. "Yakutia has a highly developed institute."¹ Dr. Alexeyev observed that many people of the "small" nationalities are in the sciences, technological and intellectual fields. Some are

¹ At present the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic is home to the Yakut University (around seven thousand students), and the Yakut branch of the Siberian Division of the USSR Academy of Sciences, which includes an Institute of Language, Literature, and History, an Institute of Biology, an Institute of Geology, an Institute for Space Physics and Aeronomics, an Institute for Arctic Problems in Physics and Technology, as well as the Institute for the Study of Permafrost of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Siberian Division.—Ed.

famed artists. The cities of Siberia are as multinational and multi-racial as Asia. That was quite apparent by the physical features of the people who stream through the streets of Novosibirsk or the mass of 15,000 students and other young people who gathered for the "Mayovka", the night before May Day, in Akademgorodok.

Novosibirsk, a trading town of only 70,000 in 1917, has grown so rapidly that there is still the contrast of the old versus the new—still standing many old cabins versus the miles of modern apartment houses. But TV antennas are seen on the log cabins. Some of the old cabins seem well cared for, painted, and enlarged, an indication that the owners prefer an individual house and garden and preservation of the traditional Russian colored wooden decorative borders around door and window frames. Other old houses seem neglected, possibly because they are to be bulldozed soon with anticipation of a new apartment to the occupant.

Novosibirsk has an opera and ballet house that could rival with the best in the U.S. in capacity and beauty. We watched a ballet performance.

In terms of the role of trade unions, cultural and academic life, sport, health and other services, Novosibirsk's pattern is about what every industrial city has in the USSR. We spent some hours at the Heavy Electrical Machinery Works with a half dozen leaders of the union factory committee, representing the 5,000 workers. These workers turn out hydrogenerators and turbogenerators. They produced the hydrogenerators for the Bratsk station of four million kilowatt capacity. The tremendous size and delicacy of machines these workers were making is evidence the Siberian workers are fast acquiring skills. Forty-five percent of the workers are women; 15 percent youth. Many of the workers began as youths at the plant since 1953 when it was inaugurated. After guiding us through the plant and answering my queries, the workers began to pound me with questions about the United States. Their questions were quite pointed. They seemed to be following news of the U.S. When we told them that it is difficult to get a two bedroom apartment in New York or Los

Angeles for less than \$300 a month, that N.Y. transportation is 50 cents a ride and gave some figures on the cost of medical care, they looked at each other in disbelief and repeated their inquiries to make sure they heard right.

ACADEMGORODOK

Academgorodok in Metropolitan Novosibirsk is more like a resort than a center of science with 22 institutes employing 25,000 in laboratories, research and technological projects. Actually a separate city with 56,000 population, Academgorodok is cut out of a birch and pine forest, with the general appearance of a well-ordered university town. It has a university of 4,000 students trained to work with the scientific institutes, totaling 58 in Siberia or their affiliates tied to the USSR's Academy of Sciences. With Academgorodok the hub, these institutes developed a grand plan for a major advance for development of Siberia. There was considerable development of industry in parts of Siberia since the Soviet Union's early years. But a push on a scale commensurate with the big possibilities was conceivable when the USSR's economic resources, technology and scientific personnel reached the level to match the tremendous undertaking. About two decades ago, as the perspective became more apparent, one of the steps taken was the establishment of Siberian coordination of scientific and technological research and study. A significant corps of outstanding Academy of Sciences personalities shifted to Siberia. Hence the establishment of Academgorodok. It became the greatest concentration of scientific work in the world, with all that is needed at hand, including a cyclotron. It became the main "brain" for development of Siberia. There are 63 academicians and associate members (the highest categories in the sciences) housed in the Academgorodok cottages; more than 300 doctors of sciences and about 3,000 candidates for doctors of sciences. Thirty percent of the scientific workers are women.

Academgorodok has a Communist Party membership of 6,700,

said Alexei P. Okladnikov, First Secretary of the Party. The Komsomol has 15,000 members, which explains why the majority of the people seen are young. The district committee of the Communist Party of 83 members has five academicians, six corresponding academicians, 12 doctors of science and 14 candidates for doctors of science. The rest are workers in construction, services and other fields. In addition, explained Okladnikov, the scientists have a close relationship with technicians and workers of various plants in Siberia in line with the Soviet Union's emphasis on close relations between scientists and workers.

Okladnikov has himself devoted a lifetime to geological work and has led a group of Soviet scientists, in an exchange with U.S. scientists, in the study of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. It brought much evidence to back the theory that at one time there was a land bridge between Siberia and North America, now the Bering Strait, through which Asians migrated down the North American west coast. He autographed for me a copy of his book on his research in Alaska and the Aleutians.

Nowhere are scientists more free in pursuing their experiments and research than in the Soviet Union, stressed Okladnikov. The Communist Party doesn't tell them how to do their work. The Party's role in Academgorodok, said Okladnikov, is mainly to keep before the scientists the priorities in the Party's general plan in all fields of Soviet economy and social life. He gave some examples how scientists take initiatives and work within such an approach. The Party places before the scientists unlimited means and opportunities in which to work. Siberia's science institutes contributed more than 120 solutions of scientific problems in 1976, resulting in many millions of rubles of saving for the USSR. This shows how the relation between the Communist Party and the scientific community works to the benefit of the people, he observed.

Okladnikov also described how a close relationship between the Novosibirsk University and the Academy of Sciences works. In their fourth year, the students are already involved in laboratory work. In the fifth year they mostly serve as assistants to scientists. The University invites applicants to spend a month of their

vacation in Academgorodok, all expenses paid, during which time their interest and aptitude are studied as they attend a few classes. Only 20 percent of the university students are from Novosibirsk; another 10 percent are from European USSR, the rest are Siberians.

Dr. Spartak Belyaev, Rector of Novosibirsk University, who was also interviewed, stressed the importance of providing a good social life for the students to encourage success. Academgorodok is a city of clubs and fine sport facilities and a big beach on the shores of the artificial "sea". We wondered a bit of what the role of a union could be in a town like Academgorodok as we entered the office of Anatoly Trofimov, leader of the 30,000 member union of the town. He told us that there are 75 local units, one in each of the 22 science units and on construction and other work locations. To our surprise, he said the 4,000 university students are also members of the union. He said the aim is to bring the students closer to the working class. But there is also need of union protection. There are dangers in laboratory work. As generally in the USSR, unions have wide authority on safety issues. There is also the need to watch for observance of the collective bargaining contract. As everywhere in the USSR the union in Academgorodok has supervision over the culture palace, the sport and athletic activities, six children's clubs with 14,000 members and 4,500 places for preschool child-care, with need for more. The unions also run the Pioneer camps in forests a short distance from town.

In Academgorodok we saw an example of the 1,377 Young Technicians' Clubs that exist in the USSR under trade union direction and expense. The report to the trade union congress in 1977 said more than 185,000 children take part in these clubs. Those clubs admitting children of public school age are equipped technologically to meet whatever choice a youngster may have for experimentation or creation. Vadim Sholokhov, director of the club we visited, showed the many sections of the building where 1,000 children try their hands at electronics, woodwork, machine-making, chemistry, TV construction and in creation of all sorts of articles, works of art and about anything a youngster



Musa Jalil Prospekt in Naberezhnye Chelny, city of the giant KAMAZ automotive plant



A new residential district in the city of Togliatti

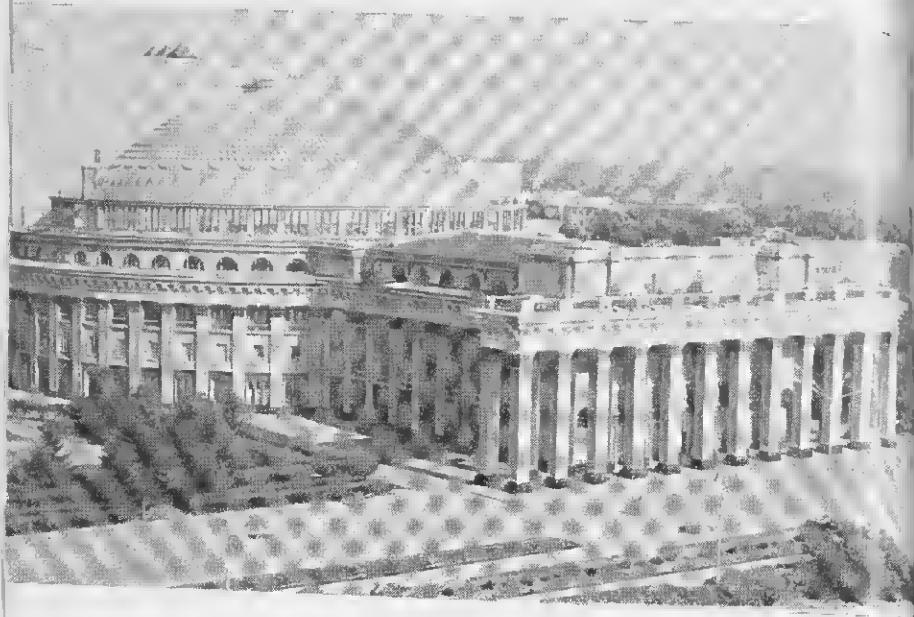
A body assembly shop at the KAMAZ plant



One of the thirty dining rooms of the Volga
Automobile Factory



Novosibirsk. Krasny Prospekt, the city's main
street



The Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theater



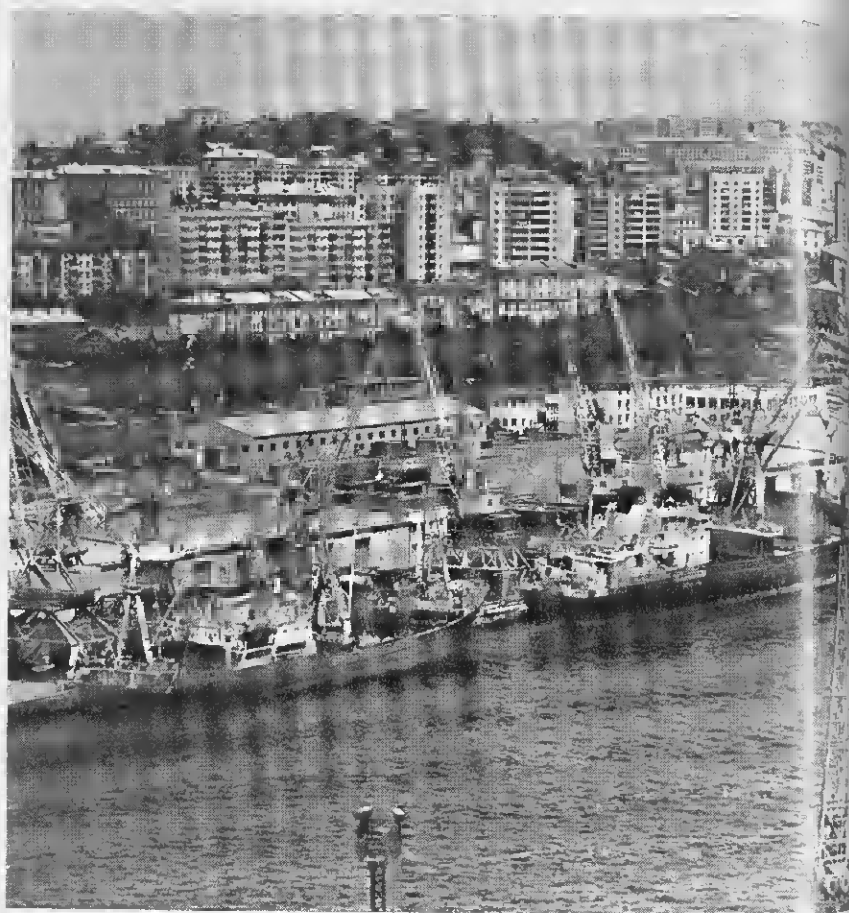
Akademi gorodok. In the foreground is the
Computer Center



In the reading room of the library of the
Khabarovsk Polytechnical Institute

A self-service department store in
Novokuznetsk, a city of miners and
metallurgists

Vladivostok: a view of the city



Vladivostok. At the docks of the commercial port



A container terminal at the Nakhodka commercial port



Early grain is harvested on one of the collective farms of the Voronezh region



The faces of many villages have changed beyond recognition in the past few years.

The administrative center of the Bolshevik collective farm in the Vladimir Region



Residential buildings of the Oktiabr collective farm in the Krasnodar Region

The House of Culture of the Friendship collective farm in the Bryansk Region

would like to dabble with. These clubs are at a much higher level than the more numerous arts and crafts clubs for children. They make many motorized objects and do metal cutting.

Sholokhov showed us the large display room filled with such products. There were several miniature automobiles motorized and running. Sholokhov said in all some 50 such cars were made. On our way out we saw a kid working on his car, preparing it for the May Day parade, next day, when all who made cars were in line, driving their vehicles. The kids become very much attached to these clubs. It gives them a chance to try and experiment and develop a scientific and technological aptitude, Sholokhov said. The clubs are free of cost to the participants. Experienced teachers come in certain hours weekly and give guidance. The children come after school. When they graduate from public school they get a certificate from the club. This helps them to choose what they want to do after graduation.

FAR EAST

A nine-hour non-stop jet flight from Moscow to the USSR's Far East maritime region gives some idea of the immensity of Siberia. I spent two weeks of intense travelling and flying in the Pacific Coast province to see just a tiny part of Soviet Far East, but it was an area as vital as it is beautiful. Vladivostok's panorama like that of neighboring Nakhodka is much like San Francisco or other San Francisco Bay area towns. The houses and buildings escalate up surrounding green hills. But that is where the similarity ends.

Vladivostok's homes are miles and miles of garden apartment buildings usually ranging from nine to 16 storeys, while in tight San Francisco old houses in which most people live hardly have space between them. Also, Vladivostok has very extensive Pacific Ocean bathing beaches while in San Francisco the Pacific waters are too rough and cold. Bathing is forbidden. Vladivostok, like San Francisco is located on a peninsula and has unlimited space for northward expansion. Its population has grown to 550,000

from the 100,000 it had in the early twenties—when invading Japanese, Americans and czarists were forced to get out. But San Francisco's southward expansion has been blocked and its population hardly changed for decades. Most important, in the big ports of Vladivostok and Nakhodka, unlike San Francisco's and neighboring Oakland, there is no unemployment, no slums, no skid-rows or red-light districts nor the mass of human "cast-offs" such as one sees in every U.S. city, no narcotics, dope pushers or anything of the sort.

Although it is half-way around the world from socialism's West European border, as in European USSR there are no privately run industries in Vladivostok. Everything is exactly as in the other Soviet cities whether in prices, procedures, public services, theater and movie house rates. You pay the same four or five kopeks for a motor bus or trolley bus ride. There is a difference in wages, scales range from 10 to 15 percent above those in European USSR, to encourage people to come and settle permanently. The people are flowing in from all ends of the country. Officials estimate that about half of those who come stay. More would stay but as fast as the housing goes up it is still behind the growth of population. Young people, married or planning to get married, cannot live in dormitories and wait years for apartments. Everywhere we went officials stressed the unlimited need for more trained workers and how much greater the area's progress could be with more labor. Nevertheless, there is much eastward migration. The cities of mostly young people are growing rapidly.

We had interesting and very informative discussions with Dmitri Gagarov, chairman of Vladivostok's executive body, G. F. Kravchuk, first deputy chairman of the maritime region, and U. I. Ostrovsky, administrator of the Far Eastern Shipping Co. (FESCO) of the USSR. It's really a "new world" of socialism. The intense buildup didn't really get under way until around 1965. They have gone a long way in building up industries. They have learned a great deal about exploiting Siberia's soil with some impressive yields. But most impressive is the buildup of FESCO, one of the world's largest fleets, plying 400 foreign

ports and serving the ports along thousands of miles of the Soviet Pacific coastline and around the Bering Strait along the Arctic. The ports of Vladivostok and Nakhodka are now among the largest in the Pacific and a third port—Vostochny—just across Nakhodka Gulf, still under construction, from all indications, will be the largest of all. The ports of both cities have become centers of commerce and the Soviet fishing industry, including processing and canning of the catch as it is unloaded. We visited one of the giant fish processing plants located just off a Vladivostok dock. It's a big operation of machines, smoking equipment, packaging, with hundreds of workers mostly women.

As more than 100,000 workers are setting a rapid pace in laying the tracks of BAM towards the Pacific Coast, in the Vladivostok-Nakhodka region they are working with equal intensity to build up the needed port capacity through which the coal, oil, iron and lumber from Yakutia and other Siberian regions will pass. After a look at the tremendous port of Nakhodka, only 26 years old, and 22 docks most modernly equipped with 70 container cranes, working 2,000 vessels and 170,000 railroad cars annually, a ferry ride across Nakhodka Gulf took us around into Wrangel Bay to see the third port. And what a sight! A number of docks and many buildings were already up as were a number of container cranes. That port, we were told, is to have 66 docks when completed, with processing plants for fish, coal, lumber and other cargo. The plan calls for a capacity of 30 million tons of cargo annually, when Yakutia's and other wealth of Siberia comes down BAM and connects to existing railroad into the port under construction. Near Wrangel Bay another town is under construction to be the home of the workers of the coming port.

The lumber dock is already in operation. Two tremendous barges, with a capacity of 10,000 tons of lumber in each, were loaded with logs to the top. They were to be pushed by tugs across the Sea of Japan more than 700 kilometers to a Japanese port. The Japanese are apparently paying for the lumber and for the iron, gas and coal to come, with credit for equipment for the ports and BAM. The big container cranes there bore labels

of Japanese firms. The Japanese are undoubtedly also interested in completion of the coal dock. It seemed near completion at the time of our trip there. Two big cement oblong forms that looked like swimming pools were already built. They will be basins for coal coming from Yakutia.

Vladivostok is also the Far East's scientific center of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Nine colleges or institutes specialize in various fields, such as the Pacific Institute of Fish and Oceanography. More than 44,000 students of the area are in higher learning. About 34,000 are in the schools for special professions. As in Soviet regions generally, the Maritime region to judge by the statistics officials gave us, is well in step on education, cultural clubs and palaces, health care, sport activity, child-care, pioneer camps and vacation resorts.

Kravchuk told us that in place of the 70,000 small peasant farms operated with horse or oxen before the Revolution, the area today has 14 big collective farms, 188 state farms and four broiler chickens operations. Agricultural area has been greatly expanded, especially on rice and soya beans.

Most pleasing during the Far East visit was the opportunity to visit the homes of workers, especially to meet on the job, Maria Popova, operator of a crane on the Nakhodka fish dock. She is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, has been a delegate to the last four congresses of the Party and holds the designation "Hero of Socialist Labor". Mrs. Popova is a grandmother and was in her 21st year as a crane operator. She came down a ladder from her workshed to meet us, a height of about six storeys. Looking pleasant, obviously younger than her age, she presented a picture of the type of people who have an important place in a socialist society.

Of the 6,000 who work on Nakhodka's docks 1,825 are women. Popova observed that there are other women doing the work she does. She told us that she was the oldest of seven children in 1947, when newly-founded Nakhodka was just a small settlement with only three old-type cranes. She was hired as a cleaning woman on the docks. In the following year she was accepted in an institute to train as a crane operator. Deputy director

Michael Krivobokov of the port authority broke in to say, "She met the challenge and today ranks among the best." Maria Popova has two sons. She is also a deputy in the Nakhodka Soviet. On bidding us goodbye, she climbed back to her workshed with the agility of a man half her age, and started the pickup of big loads of fish from the hold of a ship just returned from far north waters.

In Vladivostok I spent an evening in the home of Boris Nesterenko, a dock worker in his thirties. After a number of years as team leader he went to an institute to train as dispatcher of workers in a section of the port, a job on which he had just started. We talked until almost midnight about conditions for port workers and work procedures. He wanted to know about conditions of U.S. dock workers. In the USSR there is no dispute and never has been over containerization, a problem that still plagues U.S. dock workers. There is no unemployment, hence no concern over job security, no cut in earnings because of new technology. A Soviet dock worker may be called upon to do any work in a port, where he or the team may be needed. Every work team encourages and helps each of its members to become familiar with a number of occupations that may be related to port work so they could be shifted to other work with maximum efficiency and full use of work time. The union of port workers watches over observation of the collective agreement and enforces proper payment to workers of all four classifications in each team. The team works as long as it takes to complete a loading or unloading job. The payment for the job is then apportioned by the team to each member on the basis of classification. In addition each worker gets a percentage due him or her on the basis of the Siberia rate—10 percent extra for each year the worker is in the Far East up to 50 percent. Then there is also a merit bonus that may be due to the team for a fast overall job.

Dock workers are among the highest wage earners—at a base of 350 rubles monthly. The Nesterenkos live in a comfortable two-room apartment plus a kitchen in a new house. Mrs. Nesterenko is a doctor. They have one son in a preschool center for which they pay 12 rubles a month, meals included.

U. I. Ostrovsky, director of operations of FESCO, the fleet of ocean going vessels, gave us a comprehensive picture of the tremendous task of servicing 10 of the USSR northern ports as far as Chukotka, often with use of the fleet of 44,000 horsepower icebreakers. FESCO also operates a fleet of new luxurious passenger motorships that operate along the coast and for world cruises. I was to experience passage southward on one of them some days later for a 24-hour cruise along the Soviet coast. Those motorships are about the last word in luxury excursion vessels—individual private rooms, showers, pools, music rooms, play rooms and excellent food.

Some months after return to the United States, we drove up the U.S. West Coast as far as Vancouver, Canada. We noted rows of the blue FESCO containers in Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Oakland and on Long Beach docks.

On the whole I found the trips to Siberia's Far East and West most interesting and informative. Americans generally know least about Siberia, or believe it is hardly out of the ice age. When ex-President Ford and Leonid Brezhnev met in Vladivostok for the historic conference, some correspondents who accompanied the President were about the only Americans in that part of Siberia since American invaders departed in 1922. Some of the journalists wrote a little on their "discovery of Siberia". The facts about Siberia are breaking through, however, as journalists of U.S. publications "brave" the wilds. A documentary on Siberia by the National Geographic Society and its televised tour of Siberia were very informative.

The Siberia tour of USSR President and Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in the summer of 1978 also spotlighted Siberia to world attention for its tremendous resources and reserve for Soviet power. Significantly, Vladivostok provided a platform for him to remind the world that it was there that he and then President Ford agreed on important steps towards securing detente. It was an important geographical point from which to warn a number of powers of the danger of sliding back to a coldwar spirit.

CHAPTER IV

SOVIET TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions were of major interest to me during travels through the Soviet Union. My work on the *Daily World* and earlier, since 1934 on the *Daily Worker*, has been mainly related to trade union affairs. The trade unions of the USSR, as the largest mass organization, have more direct responsibility for and relationship to the day-to-day life of the people than any other. They express most directly the key working class base for socialism. Within the United States there is more misinformation and deliberate falsehood on the Soviet trade unions than on any other aspect of Soviet life. The truth and a clarification of the role of the USSR's unions has therefore become vital for international labor unity and stronger support of peace.

During visits to plants in many cities of the USSR I sought everywhere, and readily obtained, the opportunity to meet with leaders of the respective factory committees and city or regional leaders of the trade unions. Those meetings were of extraordinary interest because they were informative (often to both sides, with questions put to me) and they directly conveyed the spirit of working people. Covering the 16th Congress of the Trade Unions and conducting frequent interviews with leaders of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) in Moscow on trade union affairs were especially valuable.

THE SCOPE OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

In the recent period, as strongly stressed at the 16th Congress in March 1977, the unions of the USSR have assumed greater responsibilities and authority in line with the period of developed socialism in the USSR which demands greater involvement of the working class in the affairs of the country. In his speech before the 16th Congress, Leonid Brezhnev called on the unions to be even more energetic in assuming and exercising the authority and rights they have.

Some idea of the scope of the Soviet trade unions, can be gained from the essential data the AUCCTU leadership submitted to the 5,000 delegates to the 16th Congress. The membership represented was 113.5 million¹ grown since to 122 million mainly because of an increase in collective farmers admission by the unions. The 30 industry-wide unions have 700,000 primary units (locals based in factories or other work locations) headed by a committee elected annually. In the larger plants there are department subdivision committees. At the lowest level of the trade union structure, based on work teams, are the group organizations of which there are 2,500,000, subordinate to the factory committee, the highest body at the work location.

The percentage of the workforce unionized ranged then from 97.7 percent in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic to 99.1 percent in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. The degree of democracy in the USSR's unions is indicated in the report that at meetings of the local organizations for election of delegates to the Congress and review of the work of the Union, *93 percent of the membership attended and 16.5 million spoke at the meetings.* The unions have the rule that no decision or election is valid unless at least two-thirds of the membership participates.

By January 1976, there were a total of 129,000 Permanent Production Conferences (PPC) at factories or combines of factories, with about 65 percent of the 5.6 million participants from

trade unions. These conferences of union, management and technologists have in the five-year period since the previous Congress put forth eight million production proposals of which 82 percent were carried out.

When the 16th Congress met there were 143,000 collective agreements which are renegotiated annually, terms subject to approval by the membership of the unit factory committee in question. There are now 250,000 comrades courts at work locations in the USSR. Functioning under the authority of the respective trade union committees those courts of judges elected by the workers arrange trials conducted before fellow workers on the basis of charges of lack of discipline, anti-social relations, habitual drunkenness, rudeness, etc. Ten rubles is the maximum fine, but the effect of a trial before fellow workers is usually the real penalty.

In 1978 the number of sanatoria—prophylactorias under union supervision reached more than 2,000 with more than 2,000,000 patients a year. In these union-supervised establishments set up at the expense of the factory and the government social fund, workers of the given factory showing signs of illness are given 24 days of preventive treatment, spending all the time outside the worker's regular working hours at the prophylactoria. (More on this later.)

The number of union members and members of their families given treatment and rest at union-operated health resorts came to a total of about 9 million. Sanatoria, tourist bases, hotels, campgrounds under union supervision totaled about 12,000.

Cultural clubs and palaces operated by the unions numbered more than 22,000 in 1978. The unions have 305,000 "red corners" at the job site where much of the union's educational work is carried on. Libraries operated by unions numbered about 23,000 in 1978 with a total of 306 million books and journals and about 25 million readers. The number of film projectors in union palaces of culture and clubs reached 53,000.

About 6.6 million persons belonging to commissions of union organizations are engaged in youth activity. The unions run

¹ These and other figures in this chapter refer to 1977.—Ed.

about 37,000 Pioneer camps that accommodated 12 million children in 1978.

The trade unions also direct the major sports activities in the country. At present there are 33 sports organizations with a total membership of 37 million.

The unions have 2,700 stadiums; 11,700 sport halls; 836 swimming pools, about 5,000 ski runs; 5,400 shooting practice ranges; 13,000 hockey rinks; 7,500 sports rest camps; 4,000 hunting and fishing houses; 260,000 sports grounds and football (soccer) fields.

The United States AFL-CIO is the only major trade union organization that does not yet have friendly relations with the USSR's trade unions. Fraternal delegates from 115 countries attended the 16th Congress. *Today 161 trade union centers of 128 lands have ties with USSR unions.* During the five years preceding the 16th Congress 4,500 union delegations visited the Soviet Union and about 4,000 Soviet delegations were guests of foreign unions.

More than a fifth of the 16th Trade Union Congress delegates were under age 35. Forty percent were women.

There are many more statistical indicators of the broad scope and authority of the Soviet trade unions, but I am afraid the reader is already burdened with too many figures. It is appropriate to draw attention to the tremendous part the unions play in the life of the USSR in face of the stubborn refusal of the group around George Meany¹, president of the AFL-CIO, to have any relations with them. The irony is that the U.S. trade unions, with a history of almost two centuries, still embrace only 22 percent of the workforce and must continually struggle against anti-union forces to hold on to what they have. At this writing even the conservative leaders of the U.S. unions are forced to sharply denounce both capitalist parties, the Congress and the Carter Administration for failure to approve even mild reforms

¹ George Meany retired in 1979. At the AFL-CIO Congress in November 1979, Lane Kirkland, former Secretary-Treasurer, was elected President with Meany's support.—Ed.

for the rights of unions to organize and bargain collectively, for health law, child-care centers and other such needs that the Soviet people have had since the birth of the socialist republic.

But important as the above authority of the Soviet trade unions is, most important and basic is the authority and voice the union has on production and work conditions. The union committee at the work place—and every work location in the USSR has one—has tremendous authority, as many meetings with them showed. The FABCOM—factory committee—may have about a dozen subcommittees, actively involved in matters of wages, safety, problems of women and child-care, problems of youth, sports, culture palace operation, shopping conditions, pension and social benefits and the very important matter of housing, the distribution of which is primarily in the hands of the FABCOM, with approval of the local Soviet. *No basic production plans are made by the management of an enterprise without consultation with the union.*

On matters of safety the Soviet trade unions have *decisive authority. An unsafe operation can be shut down by the union's safety representative until corrected.* The AUCCTU has a large chain of institutes specializing in safety and factors influencing occupational health, cause of diseases, air pollution, chemicals, temperature and related problems. No new plant or technology goes into operation without a safety and health check by the union's specialists. Similarly, there are continual studies on conditions affecting women at work, as well as of youth.

A worker cannot be dismissed in the Soviet Union without approval by the FABCOM and a written statement by the plant director of the reason for dismissal.

The trade union movement's influence on conditions of work, wages and related matters, really starts at the stage when planning begins for the next five-year plan. *Union representatives are consulted on all matters within the trade unions' province.* Every past plan, as the current Tenth Plan, contained a provision for an annual raise in wages over the five years plus an increase in the social consumption fund (the hidden wage). In a planned

economy with no inflation, such advance agreement is possible and the amount of the raise is *real*. The overall plan, including the wages section, then goes to each of the ministries to be implemented in the respective industry. There again representatives of union and the ministry confer on the labor-related aspects. The matters at the plant level are discussed directly between FABCOM and the management in annual negotiations.

The trade unions in the United States cannot even dream of so much influence on the economy and issues affecting the life of the members they represent. At the AFL-CIO convention in December 1977, a great hope was aroused by the Meany leadership for passage of a labor reform bill in Congress. It was a modest measure, essentially a legal restriction on employers who procrastinate and deliberately file delaying court suits to nullify collective bargaining. Hope was high because even the President promised to support the measure. The bill was killed in the Senate by a filibuster—the privilege to talk endlessly on anything—with the most reactionary senators taking turns talking for weeks—until the bill was withdrawn. For more than 40 years unions have demanded a national health law that would make health-care available at government expense or for a modest cost. *But there is no such measure in sight yet.* Occupational health conditions and accidents are more menacing in the U.S. than in any major industrial country. Profit is still more important than the lives of coal miners, thousands of whom are afflicted with “black lung”. Thousands of Asbestos workers are doomed to die of cancer. Thousands of cotton textile workers are menaced with fibroid “brown lung”. Even after some safety legislation is improved the inadequacy of government inspectors, not to mention bribes taken by some, makes the improvements meaningless. Union representatives dealing with safety have no real rights. They can only complain.

The idea of a union's right to initiate legislation, which exists in the Soviet Union's labor law, is unthinkable in the U.S. A union can only depend on the kindness of politicians of the two capitalist parties to do so. Many bills which unions request are sponsored by members of Congress as a gesture of political friend-

ship to attract labor's votes. But most often such bills just collect dust in Congressional committees and die of old age.

A provision making the management of an enterprise subject to prosecution for violation of a collective bargaining agreement, as under Soviet labor law, is inconceivable in the capitalist United States. Nor is the requirement conceivable for every factory to have places reserved for high school graduates as under Soviet labor law and the requirement that such newcomers be placed under the guidance of veteran mechanics and be given time to continue school while working.

But a bureaucracy unable to win job security or some of the elementary human rights for most U.S. workers is still screaming against “recognition” of the gigantic Soviet trade union movement. For decades the Meany bureaucracy was given veto power over granting visas admitting Soviet trade union delegations invited to America. Times are changing, however, a number of U.S. unions are ignoring the stupidities of the Meany bureaucracy. Even the U.S. government has been forced to lift to some extent, its ban on visas for Soviet trade union delegations.

Unlike many unions in the U.S., Soviet trade unions have no fear of new technology, higher production, imports, closing of plants because of bankruptcy or employers' efforts to escape unions by relocating plants to non-union areas or other countries. There are no bankruptcies relocating to avoid unions or anything of the sort in the USSR. To the contrary, the workers of the USSR strive for ever higher productivity because that means more earnings for them and improvement for Soviet people generally. They are working for themselves not for profiteers. In fact, the AUCCTU is also the parent body for the Inventors and Rationalizers and the Scientific and Technical Societies in the USSR with a membership of more than 17 million, most of them workers.

Suggestions from workers for production improvements are not the “suggestion boxes” in U.S. plants, with the employer's promise not to make known the name of the person making the suggestion. It is not popular among U.S. workers to cooperate for employment reduction. And it is well known that employers

who use a suggestion pay a trivial sum for it, if at all. But in the Soviet Union the trade union movement regulates the process, insures recognition and fair appraisal of proposals and if it is used, payment to the author of an amount commensurate with the value of the invention or suggestion. In that way workers are paid millions of rubles annually.

Women who comprise about half the membership of the USSR's unions, have great influence and occupy top leadership positions. A long standing differential in earnings unfavourable to women has been virtually wiped out. The labor laws provide many forms of occupational protection for women. Time is also given for mothers to breast-feed newborn babies at required intervals while at work with special rooms provided for that purpose. Paid time of 56 days before and 56 days after birth is supplemented in the USSR with the right to stay off the job for a whole year without pay, until the child is old enough to be placed in a nursery. Child-care centers are available—13 million places at the last count, generally costing 12 rubles monthly with four meals daily.

In the United States there are no such provisions. Women in one General Electric plant seeking time off during pregnancy under the sick-leave provision of their union contract were ruled ineligible for such time off with pay by the U.S. Supreme Court. There is still a high differential in wages unfavorable to U.S. women because they are often paid less for same work and they rarely have the opportunity to be engineers, architects, or work in most higher-paid occupations. In the USSR, however, there are women in all the high-paid professions. There is no wage gap.

In Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, I was granted an interview by Naima Makhmudova, Secretary of the republic's three-million member trade unions. Coming from a land where to this day there has never been a woman in the top body of the labor federation or in the highest office of a major union or region, I was especially interested to meet a woman leader of a three-million member union organization in a Central Asian republic where just half a century ago there were no unions, and

where women didn't appear on the streets without a veil (*paranja*) covering their faces. Naima Makhmudova said the composition of the Uzbek unions is multi-racial and more than 100 tongues are spoken by its members. Later, when I visited the Tashkent integrated textile complex employing 12,500, 80 percent women, FABCOM deputy chairperson Maria Chubasova provided some interesting data on how the USSR's unions develop women activists. Each of the seven plants has a committee of 11 to 15. Then there are hundreds of team based units and many sub-committees handling the many union responsibilities. Hardly there is a large local union in the United States where even ten percent of the membership is active.

We walked through the plants employing young women, their features and skin pigmentation showing Central Asia's multi-national character. We saw the same at the Tashselmash plant, where 6,500 workers produce four-row cotton pickers and are preparing to shift to a six-row type. There Ivan Samartsev of the FABCOM told us that some 1,500 of the membership have some union responsibility.

It was especially interesting to visit the Tashselmash plant which I had visited 17 years earlier. As Ivan Samartsev escorted me through the plant, he pointed to many of the advances since my 1959 visit that made the plant a key producer of the kind of machines that helped to bring a record production of 8.5 million tons of cotton in the USSR in 1978. Outside on plant grounds, construction of an additional section was underway. Samartsev said it would be a problem to get about 500 additional workers. Not an easy task, he added. In the yard there was also a display of the cotton pickers the plant had been manufacturing since its early days. One-row, two-row and four-row pickers were displayed. Pointing to the single-row equipment Samartsev said, "this was the machine you probably saw 17 years ago. Now we are preparing to turn out a six-row model."

Production at the beginning of the Tenth Five-Year Plan was running to 8,000 machines a year. The aim is to reach 11,000 by the end of the plan. Describing the structure of the plant union, Samartsev said 38 percent of the workers are women, 12 members

of the plant union committee of 31 are women. What do the 1,500 activists of the union do? Each of the 31 plant union committee members heads a sub-committee, including committees on wages, socialist emulation, safety, housing, social welfare benefits, social insurance, vacation and allotment of reduced cost vouchers, communal services, sports, special diets on which 13,000 rubles are spent, the plant restaurant, cultural club operation, international relations and others. These committees range in size from seven to 13. Then there are 27 departments with a department committee in each. These are further subdivided with a group-organization in each of 270 work teams.

This structure gives an idea of the wide scope of a Soviet trade union. Samartsev then led me to the office of Director Irik Mysin, who gave us some figures on the distribution of some of the profit that remains annually with the local administration. According to law, the general procedure is to use those funds in three ways: 1. For bonuses, the "13th month" pay—a common year-end custom in the USSR—and similar payments to workers. 2. Social welfare, housing if needed, help to workers in special need. 3. For plant modernization. In the previous year the workers received from the fund: 608,000 rubles in routine bonuses; 479,000 additional cash payments; 70,000 to sport competition winners; half a million rubles as the 13th month pay; 90,000 rubles in aid to workers with emergency needs.

The above structure of a plant union is quite typical of the USSR generally. As for the division of the profits fund, decisions by joint management-union consultation may vary depending on profits and other factors.

In Armenia, my interview at union headquarters was with another woman Elisa Terlemezjan, Secretary of the 1,100,000 member unions of the Republic. Of the four secretaries in Armenia two are women. Six of the country's industrial unions are headed by women.

What about disputes related to working conditions? I asked that question during many of the conferences with FABCOM leaders. It is a question often asked in the U.S. As on all common procedural matters coordinated by AUCCTU, the explanation was the

same everywhere. Every enterprise has a disputes committee with management and the union representatives. Most often issues are settled there quickly *because the dispute is not between two antagonistic classes*. The people in management have no personal profit interest. But management is interested in showing a good record for the enterprise and may be interested at most in a bonus, as are all workers, if production is above the norm. Moreover, on many matters, such as the right to fire and safety, FABCOM has the final say. But if disagreement remains on a problem affecting labor conditions, either the union, the individual worker, a group of workers, or management may take the case to court, where a decision is usually taken very quickly.

What type of disputes arise? A worker may claim that he or she is entitled to a higher occupational grade of the seven grades in most occupations. Or he or she may have been shifted to more skilled work but is still being paid at the old rate. FABCOM may, on behalf of all workers, charge that ventilation is poor, or that the dining facilities and food are bad. Or piece rates may be too low to equal a required monthly wage scale. Often the complaint is about illegal dismissal. Many FABCOM leaders told of improper dismissal cases. In Armenia, the union noted some dismissals from a number of plants that were challenged by the individual workers in court. The majority were reversed by the court mainly on the ground that the directors did not seek approval of the dismissals by the FABCOM of the enterprise. In some of these cases the leaderships of the respective FABCOMs did not defend the right of the dismissed workers. Terlemezjan explained that most of the problems in such cases are in smaller enterprises, where both management and the FABCOM leaders are ignorant of the rules. In those situations she added, those responsible were ordered to attend trade union classes on Soviet labor law. In the Moscow district several hundred such illegal dismissals reversed in the courts were reported in an article in *Trud*, the daily of the AUCCTU, by the chairman of the Moscow district. One reason is very rapid expansion and the frequent opening of new enterprises, their workforce often made up of new people just entering the trade unions. But the basic fact

remains that the workforce, management and the courts are of the same class, not interested in outwitting or swindling one another for class or personal interest. Hence, strikes are pointless—as senseless as cutting off your nose to spite your face.

You still meet progressive people in the U.S. who say; “Why do they need unions if they have no bosses to fight?” Lenin answered that question in his time, when he stressed the need to struggle against bureaucracy and mismanagement. The Soviet trade unions have no need of strikes to get results. The law is always on the side of the workers and their unions, as is the press and every government agency. As already noted, the role and responsibility of the unions has widened far beyond the traditional role of unions in non-socialist lands. It is within the province of a FABCOM to have a say on shopping facilities in its neighborhood, if they are inadequate, to demand action; they also have a say on services such as laundry, cleaning, shoe repair, etc. If the schools where the children of its members go are substandard, or whether a medical clinic needs improvement. A Soviet trade union has as large a responsibility on matters outside the shop affecting the living conditions of its members, as within the shop. *That is why Soviet trade unions are relatively MORE ACTIVE than most unions in capitalist countries.* That is why so large a percentage of the members of Soviet trade unions are involved and take responsibility through an assortment of committees. At the same time the number of full-time trade union staff people is relatively smaller than of unions in capitalist lands.

On the basis of about a score of FABCOMs we questioned on the percentage of members involved and active, the range ran from 25 percent to as high as 40 percent—a national average projected to around 40 million. This is a rate of involvement and a democracy unknown throughout history.

Soviet trade union elections are exceptionally democratic. FABCOM elections take place annually and are directly tied to a review of the work for the past year. In fact, there is no electioneering around personalities as in U.S. unions when there is a contest. Most of the discussions which often occur during debates give an appraisal of the FABCOM's work for the past year.

The choice of personnel for the next term emerges naturally from the discussions. Election is by secret ballot. But no election is valid unless at least two-thirds of the members are present, a rule no major union in the U.S. would even try to apply.

The more one sees of the work of the Soviet trade unions, the clearer becomes the concept that Lenin developed on the immediate and general historic role of the unions, especially in the stage of developed socialism. Leonid Brezhnev, addressing the 16th Congress of the Trade Unions, referred to Lenin's speech of December 30, 1920, in which Lenin said:

“On the one hand, the trade unions, which take in all industrial workers, are an organization of the ruling, dominant, governing class. . . . But it is not a state organization; nor is it one designed for coercion, but for education. It is an organization designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school: *a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism.*”

Quoting the underlined words, Brezhnev went on: “Have these aspects of trade-union work been exhausted under developed socialism? No, they have not. On the contrary, they assume still greater importance now and reveal themselves more fully.

“The Soviet trade unions have always been a school of economic management. And it is also a matter of fundamental importance that they are a school of socialist economic management.”

Brezhnev further observed that the unions, in effect, have also “concern for the rights and interests of the working people and their working and living conditions”. But he stressed there is no contradiction because “the growth and qualitative improvement of the economy provide a direct and sure way of improving the living conditions of the working man, his family and every citizen.”

The general theme of Brezhnev's address was to underline the far greater role and authority of unions as socialism advances closer to the stage of Communism. Much of what he said was even critical of the unions for not fully playing the role expected of them in the period of developed socialism. He said:

"The trade unions have a rich arsenal of forms and means to exercise their rights—workers' meetings, standing production conferences and collective agreements. They have the right of legislative initiative. In a word, the trade unions have many rights and opportunities. It is important to use them more fully and efficiently."

Brezhnev called attention to a number of shortcomings in services and food catering at places of work and said: "Not only Party organizations but also the trade unions cannot afford to take a passive stand at a time when considerable allocations for the construction of housing, child-care institutions, schools, hospitals, clubs, stadiums are not being fully used in a number of republics, territories and regions from year to year."

Brezhnev was also critical because of the neglect of safety requirements in certain industries, adding: *"It sometimes happens that the management and the trade unions ignore serious drawbacks, regard measures to improve labor conditions and safety as of minor importance, and tolerate neglect in meeting the obligations written down in collective agreements."*

The trade union leaders of the USSR are the last ones to claim everything is in fine shape. Those on top are certainly not the boastful type. In many discussions with them, whether in the general AUCCTU offices or with leaders at the FABCOM level, they were always frank about problems. You can search U.S. history from beginning to end and will never find a case of the head of state coming before a union audience with the admonition for the unions to be "more demanding and energetic" or drawing attention to violations of terms "written down in collective agreement". To the contrary, U.S. presidents or other government leaders addressing union conventions come with pleas to be more "moderate", less "demanding" and more conciliatory towards business and they stress the identity of capital-labor interests.

Evgeny Zernov, Secretary of the Moscow unions, observed during an interview that millions of new members are flocking into the trade unions, mostly young people, as new plants open almost daily. The great problem is to educate these newcomers

on the meaning of unionism and on how to apply its principles and to teach them the labor laws. For that reason, said Zernov, special schools were set up to teach the new unionist the responsibilities of the FABCOM and the legal rights of the union and its members. I observed to Zernov that in the U.S. and USSR conditions are completely different; while the Soviet Union has all the labor protection laws a union or an individual worker may desire, the problem is to educate large number of workers and management in their application. In the United States, however, the problem is how to develop an effective enough struggle to get urgent legal protection for workers and unions, as well as the endless struggle to hold on to such rights as have been won.

Article 107 of the Fundamentals of Labour Legislation of the USSR covers all aspects of labor protection and collective bargaining, unlike the very questionable provisions in the United States under perpetual legislative and court dispute, more a paradise for lawyers than a protection for workers. For almost 15 years the big textile monopoly J. P. Stevens & Co. continued to defy several lower and supreme court rulings, ordering it to bargain collectively with the union choosing rather to spend millions of dollars in courts with endless efforts to find loop-holes in the law.

As an example how clear-cut Soviet labor law is, Article 105 of the Fundamentals of Labor Legislation says:

"Officials guilty of violation of labor legislation and labor protection regulations, officials guilty of failure to carry out the terms of collective agreements and labor protection agreements or of obstructing the work of trade unions, shall be held legally responsible in conformity with the legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics."

In an article published in *Pravda* on November 23, 1977, Brezhnev noted that unions "act resolutely and unhesitatingly when any manager of an enterprise forgets the standards laid down in labor legislation or the social needs of the working people. Last year, nearly 10,000 such administrators were removed from their posts at the demand of trade union committees". In the U.S. the removal of an official of an enterprise on union demand is unthinkable, an offense against "management prerogative".

HOUSING PROBLEM

As I write these lines, Americans are still viewing the weekly series of television documentaries entitled the "Unknown War", which has been running an hour a week for 20 weeks. For the first time since the end of World War II millions of Americans had a good look at the war from the start of the Nazi invasion, with its trail of horrible destruction and death, to the time the Soviet forces drove out the Hitlerites and their triumphant entry into Berlin. Even Americans, who knew of the horrible statistics of the war in the USSR,—1,710 cities and towns and over 70,000 villages destroyed, which left 25 million people homeless, about 32,000 industrial establishments gutted, 198,000 collective farms and 1,900 state farms ransacked, 40,000 hospitals and other medical centers, 84,000 schools and other teaching establishments, and 43,000 libraries razed to the ground and 20 million people killed—40 percent of all World War II casualties—hardly comprehended the magnitude of horror and destruction. The United States did not lose a single house due to the war. The war in the East was truly an "unknown war" to Americans.

All I saw of the devastation was the little that was still in evidence in Stalingrad in 1959. But as you follow the full horror of the war in film, from city to city, as millions of Americans are doing although very belatedly, you get a measure of the power of the socialist effort and organization that made possible reconstruction in so little time. In scores of cities visited we saw the same panorama of endless rows of high-rise apartment buildings, colossal industrial establishments, wide boulevards, schools, libraries, hotels, hospitals, theaters and all other public necessities on a scale that dwarfs the lands of Western Europe.

Soon after the 25th Communist Party Congress in 1976, I sought and obtained interviews with Gennady Makarov, head of the housing department of the AUCCTU and with Alexander Obekunov, Secretary of the eight-million member Construction and Building Materials Industry Workers Union. Both Makarov and Obekunov stressed that on the whole, the housing situation in the Soviet Union is still serious. The USSR is still behind

in housing due to war losses. Housing construction is also in a race with the steadily rising population. The pressure for more spacious and better homes is also intense because the general living level of Soviet people has risen greatly. An addition problem is the rapidly swelling city population, with many people, especially the youth, moving from the villages. Despite the efforts to limit the number of newcomers to large cities, Moscow, for example, now has eight million people. The rapid rise of industries and the development of areas that were practically barren makes imperative the parallel construction of housing, schools, hospitals, stores, etc., if a workforce is to be attracted and maintained. New cities and settlements had to be built on hundreds of locations.

So serious was the situation in the years after the war, observed Makarov, that as late as in the early sixties the average housing space in Moscow (although it did not suffer destruction) was three square meters per person (bedrooms and living room; kitchen, hall and bathroom space not counted). But in 1976 (at the time of the interview), continued Makarov, 90 percent of Moscow's homes were either new or renovated. If a family had as little as seven square meters per person and shared a bathroom, as some still do, its position was termed bad and it was in line for a better apartment. He also observed that even many of the apartment buildings put up immediately after the war require major repair because they are very inferior in quality and construction, the products of hasty emergency efforts and of many inexperienced workers. Many able building craftsmen were killed during the war. I saw some of those early apartments. They were very compact with small rooms and many defects. But for all that the people who received them then considered themselves very lucky. Many still live in that type of apartment.

Under the circumstances, the system for a just allotment of housing as it became available was and continues to be a major problem. In this respect the major responsibility was assigned to the trade unions, more specifically to the trade union committee at the work location, be it the factory, an institute or other type of enterprise.

Houses may be built by direct contract of the local Soviet with a government construction firm or else the joint management and union of an enterprise can make such contract directly with a construction firm, with the construction financed from the profits of the enterprise. In the latter case, Makarov observed, the union's representative must be a signatory of the contract or it isn't valid. The union has an important say in construction plans, location and other details concerning the homes. At many plants visited, I was told that the workers' homes were built by construction workers employed at the given factory. I saw some very fine apartments built by such construction teams. Workers can also be in line for homes allotted to their plant from construction by the local Soviet.

In farm areas, where 25 percent of the USSR's total housing is located, collective farms either build from their own resources and labor, or similarly through contracts with the government's building firms. But as already noted, in many cases collective farmers build their own homes with the aid of loans and materials. Some seven percent of the USSR's homes are cooperatives purchased by individuals who, in some cases, do not want to go through the long wait or who desire more suitable locations and need more space. The cost of such a home may run to some 10,000 rubles, requiring a down payment and from ten to twenty years to pay off at one percent interest. After the apartment is paid off the occupant has no obligations, no property taxes or anything of the kind.

The bulk of Soviet housing is provided under the allotment system at every work location, with a waiting list of applicants in need of a change. As Makarov explained, allotment is not just simply the renting of apartments as they become available. *They are offered to the worker free of charge to be occupied for life or as long as desired, but the occupant cannot sell or transfer the apartment to anyone.* The approximately 11 million housing units produced in each of the last three five-year plans housing some 160 million persons were given away in that way. The only obligation is to thereafter pay the monthly charges of rent and utilities amounting on an average four to six percent of a family's

monthly income. Every Soviet occupant of a house goes to a local bank branch monthly with his or her account book, in which about ten charges are listed—rent, gas, water, heat, even the roof antenna. Also, the phone and electric bills are paid separately. For two years we stood in line along with Soviet citizens to make the payments. We observed that hardly anyone paid above 15 rubles. There are no landlords knocking at the doors.

With such an important "giveaway" and many in wait for new and better apartments, the manner in which the homes are distributed is a very widespread concern. The union committee of every enterprise, store or other institution has a sub-committee on housing which both handles allotment and watches over the maintenance of homes occupied by the workers. The housing committee checks on the living condition of applicants for a change in housing—size of family, why they need more space, whether there are invalids, veterans, their status as workers in the plant—and considers recommendations for preferential treatment. Within that framework there are certain preferences—veterans of the war, invalids and usually a percentage of the housing of a plant is set aside for the best workers. The latter is essential both in acknowledgement of the contribution of such workers to socialist construction and because it is urgent to insure that such workers stay at their jobs in an economy that continually needs more workers. On the other hand, applicants for improved housing with a bad record, those who are undisciplined, frequent absentees, habitual drinkers and show little work aptitude, may even be pushed to the bottom of the list. Generally, however, there is strict observation of the order of the list. Workers in the Soviet Union's plants are as keenly interested in such strict observance just as U.S. workers are in the job seniority lineup affecting their position in event of mass layoffs.

The recommendation of the sub-committee on housing, as required by law, is posted prominently on bulletin boards so workers affected may see it and object if in their judgment there is an injustice. An objection can be presented in writing or orally to the union committee or even to a general meeting of the employees. The decision is taken for approval before the joint man-

agement-union housing committee and its decision is put before the local Soviet for final approval. But as Makarov noted, the decision of the union is hardly ever changed.

There are on occasion some sharp disputes over decisions on housing allotment. At times charges of violation of the order on housing allotment even reach the pages of the press. A number of times I read letters to *Pravda* describing violations, such as the influence of a plant manager who channeled a new apartment illegally to a relative or crony with either the intentional or unintentional oversight by leaders of the union committee. Such violations belong in the category of serious crime and may bring a manager's dismissal or worse. Similarly, union committee members who are nearsighted on such matters face severe reprimand.

Evictions are virtually impossible, observed Makarov. In the first place a person's inability to pay the rent plus charges is inconceivable, because there are no unemployed and this expense is about the lowest in a person's monthly budget. There are cases of tenants who make themselves obnoxious by disorderly behavior, drunkenness, noise and such. But such persons, said Makarov, would present similar problem wherever they lived. It is better to handle such cases via court action on charges of disorderly conduct. People with small children or families with invalids cannot be evicted under any circumstances. Such are the ethics surrounding the housing question where the "landlord" is a socialist government. There aren't any real estate interests monopolizing the housing business for profits at rents of \$250-\$300 a month or more as in most urban centers of the United States today.

The United States was in the midst of a very intense inflation when we returned from the Soviet Union. The cost of housing rose much more steeply than all other items, more than doubling in just a few years. But I was also struck by an ironic trend. In the Soviet Union there is a marked decline in housing problems with the current construction and design more durable and with more convenience and space. In the United States inflation has raised the price and mortgage interest rates to about 10 percent, (13 percent at this writing) so that home purchasing is beyond the reach of even many middle-class people. But the

government's own survey of housing made public recently disclosed a most scandalous deterioration in the quality of housing construction, as real estate interests and builders "economize" to produce the shoddiest houses in the country's modern history. If, for example, one finds a house for the current "low" price of \$50,000 to \$100,000 on a 25 to 30 year mortgage at ten percent interest, by the end of that period one would actually pay about three times the original cost. But even more tragic, the houses currently built are so flimsy, of such poor material and workmanship, that they are not likely to last 25-30 years, and may need major renovation at the halfway point.

Many have no choice but to risk such venture, because rental vacancies are very few, or they are not within reasonable transportation to a job. The tragedy becomes worse for many who at some stage in their life lose their jobs and face the risk of either failing to make the high monthly payments and losing the house, or of taking a job, if available that may take hours of commuting. Little wonder that the government estimated in 1977, in its so-called "intermediate" budget for city families—those who presumably are at the level of skilled workers—that it required \$1,472 a year to cover transportation costs (up by at least 50 percent by the end of 1979).

The interview with Obekunov shed interesting light on the building industry which made possible the construction achievements of the USSR. The union he heads covers also the production of building materials, even the research institutes of the industry and its products, its membership of eight million workers in 27,000 primary units (locals), with a fourth actively participating in union affairs. Of the members, for example, 25,000 serve on safety committees. Eighty percent of the membership is engaged in production work and half have either a secondary or incomplete secondary education. This is a high level, and explains in part the high productivity attained in recent years.

Just as all enterprises in the country, the construction organizations employing the workers are government run. They specialize in various sectors of construction—housing, industrial, road, equipment installation and the like. Their employees work as brigades,

teams ranging in size from 20 to 60 or more, depending on the projects assigned. There were 183,000 such building teams in the USSR in 1976. The team system has for some years been brought in line with the "Zlobin" method of work, developed by a now very famous construction worker named Nikolai Zlobin. Essentially, it consists of a team of about 30, that organizes itself, names its leader and arranges its occupational responsibilities. Because of the shortage of labor in the Soviet Union, teams inevitably include new workers and some with minimal experience. The principle is that the team members strive to raise the skill of those with less experience and encourage each team member to acquire at least two occupational skills. In that way no one is ever idle.

The team meets periodically to review the situation and takes steps to correct weaknesses and in general works as a cooperative. When the weather is bad, cold or rainy, work may be shifted indoors. Similarly, during other holdups, ways are found to keep busy at other sectors of construction. There is never loss of work time or temporary layoff. If for some unavoidable reason there is stoppage pay continues anyway. In addition to the fact that building workers are among the most highly paid, the team as a group earns a substantial bonus to be divided up, depending on how quickly and well the job is completed. In their way, one team, without constant supervision, but solely on the strength of its cooperative relationship, builds a high-rise apartment building from the start to the point of painting and decorating done by others.

The above should in no sense downgrade U.S. construction or the work standard of U.S. building workers. There is no doubt that in housing construction the U.S. is at a high level where builders want high quality and invest in it. But with the current drive to meet inflation costs on building materials and to make high profits on the one hand, and on the other hand the intense speedup forced on the workers, much of the housing construction is so shoddy that it both shames craftsmen in the industry and swindles the buyers.

CHAPTER V

WORKING THE LAND

A half century ago only horse-drawn and ox-drawn plows were seen on farms of the USSR. A tractor, even the small Fordson that came into use in the United States, was just a hope. Most farmers classed as poor lived in shacks, many still dependent on a kulak for the loan of a horse in exchange for work on the latter's land. That was still the situation for some years after the large land-owning class was eliminated. General collectivization of farming began only in 1929. And what a difference half a century on the road to socialist agriculture has brought!

During our stay in the Soviet Union we had an opportunity to visit more than a dozen collective and state farms in Uzbekistan, Moldavia, the Caucasus, the Baltics, the Ukraine and the Russian Republic. The old village is rapidly giving way to urban-like settlements with all modern and socialist cultural and educational conveniences. Individual farming faded away long ago. The farm now is like a big industrial enterprise equipped with powerful tractors, combines, cotton pickers and all sorts of machines for every conceivable purpose. Stock farms have large stalls, many with automatic equipment. A large number of farms built big plants for feed-mixing and brick production for the animals. They have workshops to service and repair machinery. Many who work on farms are machine operators. Staffs of scientifically trained agronomists and specialists of all sorts are now common on farms.

While earlier I had the opportunity to witness the first historical year of collectivization, the recent two years gave me an opportunity to witness agriculture in the developed socialist stage and especially the new advance—the *inter-farm cooperation stage*.

For years the process in Soviet farming has been towards enlargement of farms by mergers among neighboring collective farms and the expansion of farm areas by means of irrigation of unused lands. But in the main that process had pretty much run its course. For a number of years, as far back as a decade ago, experimentation began in places on cooperation between collective farms in a given area for certain common objectives—such as more rational cooperative use of their machines, common supply of feed for cattle, cooperative repair work, better utilization of their skilled manpower and such.

By May 1976, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued its directive on further specialization and concentration of agricultural production on the basis of inter-farm cooperation and agri-industrial integration, there was already the experience with 6,000 such inter-farm arrangements. The document summing up the decade of experience begun by the March 1965 Plenary session of the Central Committee, intrigued us. When the opportunity was offered for a trip to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia, one of the major experimental grounds for the new stage in agriculture, we readily accepted this chance to see the future—the “collectivization of the collective farms”. And, as the old saying goes, seeing is believing. We saw the living future in six of Moldavia’s districts.

IN MOLDAVIA

In the Dubossary district we were taken through a large plant with a three-storey high mechanism manufacturing feed for cattle in the form of bricks or granules mixed from grasses, straws and chemicals. The plant was built with funds contributed by each of the participating collective and state farms in the district. The investment is in proportion to the acreage of

each farm. The feed fills the need of the farms, each paying for the amount used. The feed can be stored for long periods. It is processed in accordance with scientific formulas designed to produce a higher grade of cattle.

At another division of this inter-farm cooperative we were taken through a complex of giant cattle stalls, where the animals greedily gobbled feed brought to them on a beltline. The collective farms bring their seven-day-old calves to a feed lot and receive them back when they reach full-grown weight. Under the care of experts and experienced hands in the field the operation of such a large project is far more economical and efficient than it would be if each collective farm were on its own. The inter-farm complex also operates a large milk and dairy division. Another division specializes in artificial insemination for development of the best possible stock. The member collective farms also deposit their piglets to be fed-up to full weight. Another division provides mechanical services, transportation and the cooperative use of some 800 tractors, the total among the member farms and approximately the same number of combines, trucks and reconditioning of equipment.

This makes possible very large savings, because modern methods often limit the use of certain machines to only a few days per season. We were told of many other technological problems solved more easily through inter-farm procedure.

There is also a building division through which the construction resources of the collective farms in the district can be used for major building projects, construction of houses, schools, cultural clubs, hospitals, roads, cattle stalls, storage places, etc. The giant feed-plant and the cattle stalls were built by members of the inter-farm building cooperative, using mostly building material from the ground of the member farms. There are more complexes in the Dubossary inter-farm cooperative, among them fruit, vegetable, grape, wine and tobacco production, seed selection and poultry.

The profits of the inter-farm cooperative are also distributed to the member farms in proportion to their acreage. The farms of the district—and that means in all of Dubossary—have a council

that meets regularly and may decide on further expansion and investment proportionate to their acreage.

In Dubossary, as in the other inter-farm cooperatives we visited, authority is very much in the hands of the directorship of agronomists, veterinarians, chemists, zoologists and accountants.

Much of the pressure for the inter-farm approach came from the ranks of the member collective farms, because it was a way to solve many problems the managements of the farms found difficult or could not cope with. Modernized farming is steadily becoming more complicated, often beyond the capacity of the directors of many smaller collective farms. In effect, the inter-farm type of cooperative and its council became a higher authority over an area. As one manager put it, the collective farms set up the new inter-farm organizations and remain totally independent. But, in effect, the new institution is to a large degree under government direction. With neighboring state farms in many cases also joining the inter-farms they are really joint state-cooperative institutions. The state farms are just like any other state-operated industries, with its workers on wages and conditions the same as for workers in industry. Collective farms are cooperatives owned by its members with income pro-rated.

All the other inter-farm cooperatives we saw in Moldavia were similar to Dubossary's. Everywhere data was cited showing productivity far beyond usual levels and high satisfaction among farms participating in the new way.

The development of inter-farming cooperation calls for a far speedier pace for training technologists and experts in the agri-industrial field. We spent two days at the Lenin State Farm Technicum in the Dondushan district of Moldavia, located in a park of more than 125 acres. A thousand students, 30 percent women, are in training to become specialists in agriculture. Connected with the technicum is a very large state farm with the most advanced equipment for cultivating grapes, grain, tobacco, fruit as well as for cattle-breeding and dairy productions. Victor Olmada, director of the technicum, said students who are high school graduates participate in the farm's work. They receive a monthly

stipend of 100 rubles during the three and a half years of training.

In the Edintse district, we interviewed 37 year-old Ivan Ustian, district Secretary of the local Communist Party organization in the House of Scientific Progress. He provided figures showing that the 15 collective farms of the district in the inter-farm organization showed very significant production advances and that the specialists and mechanics staffing the inter-farm cooperative earn substantially more than the average income on collective farms. Colored charts telling the story graphically covered the walls of the lecture hall in which the interview took place. Ustian, former head of the Komsomol, wrote a book on inter-farming which is used as a text.

Inter-farming cooperatives also brought a significant change in rural conditions. In the past each individual farmer often built his own house with the possible cooperation of others. With inter-farm cooperation of building on a larger scale, such construction was speedier and on a much higher quality level. We saw one such new housing development in the Edintse district. The house we visited had a large living room, dining room, kitchen, hallway, three bedrooms, bathroom, one more bedroom on the second floor, and the usual garden of about a half acre allotted every farmer. The occupant bought the house for 10,000 rubles to be paid off in ten years at an interest rate of less than one percent. When paid off, the owner will not have one kopek of expense for rent or property taxes.

Since our trip to Moldavia in June 1976, inter-farming had advanced rapidly. In his very important speech before the Party's Central Committee on July 3, 1978, Leonid Brezhnev noted that *in two years the number of inter-farms rose to "more than eight thousand"*. The speech was an examination of the Soviet Union's agricultural course and experience since March 1965, when the Party launched the ambitious drive to advance agriculture more speedily than at any time in the past. Brezhnev called attention to the significantly higher percentage of the budget in each of the five-year plans that went for furthering agricultural capitalization, fertilizer production, drying up of swamp lands, etc. He

cited production figures—for all of agriculture, not just inter-farming, for the period since the March 1965 meeting. Grain production in the 1959-1965 period averaged 128.1 million tons a year; in 1971-77, 189.6 million tons. Cotton production rose from 4.84 million tons to 7.91 million tons a year; vegetables from 16.5 million tons to 23.3 million tons; meat and meat products, from 9.2 million tons to 14 million; milk from 63.9 million tons to 88.8 million; eggs from 53.5 billion to almost double. In 1977, 77 million tons of fertilizer was manufactured, compared to 27 million in 1965. Sale of butter rose from 702,000 tons to 1,276,000 tons.

In the 13 years, observed Brezhnev, 450 million square meters of housing space was built in the changing villages. He noted that in 1940 the total housing space in all Soviet cities was at about that level. During this period pre-school centers accommodating almost two million children and schools for eleven million were built in the villages.

But within those annual averages, the rate of advance was much swifter in the first two years of the Tenth Five-Year Plan. *The annual average for the two years 1976-77 was 209.6 million tons of grain.* Brezhnev also noted that the number of specialists on Soviet farms rose to 1,600,000 and that one fifth of the farm workforce in the country—4,225,000—consists of machine operators.

But Brezhnev's analysis, much as had been done in 1965, was a further examination where new progress can be made. The general tone of Brezhnev's speech was to stress the success of the course mapped in 1965, as the data cited showed, *but in the well-known practice of Marxist leaders since Lenin's day, no success is considered the final word. It is inevitably accompanied by critical analyses meant to clear difficulties in the path of further and even more rapid progress.* An example of the way bourgeois reporters in Moscow are in the business of lying and confusing people in the U.S., is the way Dan Fisher, reporter for *The Los Angeles Times* handled the story on September 6, 1978, on the then anticipated large Soviet grain harvest in 1978. *The Los Angeles Times* (second largest in U.S. circulation) headlined the

story, "Farm Turmoil Marring Big Soviet Harvest", and stated that there is a "Kremlin crisis" over agricultural production. Fisher simply did the following: preparing his readers for the anticipated "bad" news of a large 1978 harvest, he looked back to Brezhnev's speech of two months earlier and referred to parts where the Soviet leader noted the weaknesses that must be solved if the new goals for the 12 years to 1990, are to be reached. Fisher in that way made a "Kremlin Crisis" and "Soviet Turmoil" out of the situation. He ignored the data on progress since 1965 which Brezhnev gave, although no major country in the world can match a similar agricultural rise since 1965. *And the news, so bad to Fisher, did come on November 4, 1978, with the announcement by Alexei N. Kosygin of a record grain harvest of 230 million tons, 50 million tons above the five-year average.*

GIANT FARMS

There is no compulsion for collective farms to join inter-farm arrangements. Their independent status is not affected whether they are in an inter-farm cooperative or not. In fact, the Communist Party, as in the above cited speech by Brezhnev, has stressed emphatically that *inter-farm arrangements are in order only where they bring a real economic advantage.* Most of the large collective farms have the means to do as well on their own, with efficient management. We visited quite a number of such large collective and state farms.

In the autonomous republic of Abkhazia (part of Georgia), the largest collective farm, mainly cultivating tea, but also tobacco, fruit, grapes and vegetables, has an area of more than 5,000 hectares. It grew by a process of amalgamation, that eventually embraced nine settlements with a total population of 6,500. Of the giant farm's 1,600 households, 1,200 are involved in farming. Three hundred members of the farm produced 1,560 tons of tea in 1976. We watched machines mounted on tractors, shaving ready leaves off the tops of the long rows of tea plants. Some 200 of the farm population are teachers in its schools.

Others are involved in processing the farm's products, construction, operation of four medical centers and the assortment of cultural and sport facilities.

In Estonia we visited the Rackveresk collective farm of more than 12,000 hectares and the Vinni state farm of 15,000 hectares. The average farm in Estonia is about 8,000 hectares, with the largest about 18,000 hectares. Such tremendous farm economies can afford the most advanced technology and management. As noted earlier in the section on Estonia, the Rackveresk collective farm has organized several industries, in addition to a livestock farm with 1,800 cows and dairy operations, in which only 500 persons are involved in all occupations. At Vinni state farm 945 workers care for 7,500 horned cattle, 2,700 milk cows, plus the operation of a large feed-processing plant. At Lithuania's Leonopolis State farm of more than 3,000 hectares, only 350 work year round tending 1,900 horned cattle, 650 milk cows and 27,000 hens.

Latvia's Lenin State farm of about 4,500 hectares has only 660 working members divided in a half dozen sectors of the economy, plus community services.

The Lenin Collective farm in the Tashkent area, mainly producing cotton, grew by 1976 to a population of almost 18,000 living in modernized communities.

The Busk district of the Lvov region in the Ukraine had five large stalls housing 1,500 pigs, supplying the pork needs of the area's 65,000 people, was operated by only 21 persons. It included a feed-processing plant with a pipe arrangement that mechanically sent bricks to the stalls, with an automatic feeding system in each.

From the above examples it is apparent that the process of industrial concentration and specialization in agriculture is advancing at many farms, especially in large economies, although not in all cases in inter-farm arrangements.

In light of the facts on Soviet collective farms, the stories appearing occasionally in the U.S. press reporting extreme inefficiency of Soviet farms, seem very ridiculous. United States "experts", after visits of a week or two, compare the membership

of a collective farm to the labor power it takes to run a farm of comparable acreage in the U.S. They do not take into account the fact that the members of a collective farm also take care of all community and social services, the repair and servicing of machinery, and, as we have seen, large numbers may be engaged full time in an assortment of industries, and work as agronomists and other specialists. In the United States a farm's productivity is measured only by the number of hired workers directly involved in production. The U.S. is blessed by a far more favorable soil and climate than the USSR, which is undoubtedly a factor in its higher agricultural productivity. But in terms of social conditions for farmers, the high technological advancement in recent years has forced millions of individual farmers who cannot meet the technological costs, to quit the soil in effect bankrupt, many to join the impoverished and unemployed in urban areas. Farming in the U.S. today is predominantly agri-business on a large scale, for the benefit of large corporations.

NO MIGRATORY WORKERS

We often asked farm leaders whether there are in the Soviet Union hired farm laborers who follow the crops and get paid by the day, as in the United States and capitalist lands generally. The answer was a definite "no" everywhere. Some seemed puzzled by the question. We explained that in the United States agricultural workers do not have farms, but are the lowest paid and most exploited, mostly from the ranks of the Black, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Chicano or other Latinos, and poorest white population. They number in the many hundreds of thousands, with only a tiny percentage having some union protection. Every year they generally start concentrating in areas in southernmost parts of the country in hope of getting hired for the earliest harvests, then keep moving northward as later crops come due. Large numbers take their children with them in rickety old cars, even camp equipment, while waiting along roads to be hired. The ranchers provide rooms for them in shacks for the period they

are employed. Frequently these shacks are condemned even by government inspectors as unfit for human occupancy. The whole family of migratory agricultural workers, including children, work in order to make ends meet. This goes on until the end of the season, and then they return to what the worker calls home. Children of migratory workers hardly get an education under such conditions. Work on a farm between seasons is done by a few hired local residents.

In the Soviet Union there is no such occupation as a migratory agricultural worker. The workforce on a farm consists of those who are either members of the collective and live in the farm community with equal rights and social conditions as for all, or they are employees of state farms, on wages just like factory workers, who live in homes provided by the government with all the same rights as employees of any Soviet enterprise. To the question of what is done during the crucial harvest period when more workers may be needed, the answer was given that on many collective farms members engaged in other work or pensioners shift to harvesting. Or, in some cases, people from neighboring communities who usually do not work are happy to have the opportunity to make some extra money. One of the major reserves for summer farm work are students before the school year begins.

The largest of the Soviet Union's industrial unions is the Agricultural Workers Union, which numbered 18.5 million members in 1976. It has grown substantially since, enlarged by the influx of several million collective farmers whom the AUCCTU has been unionizing in recent years. The reason for that step, union leaders explained, is the change in conditions among the collective farmers. They are now covered by the general pension system of the USSR and have all the rights of workers generally. In the past those provisions were provided out of the funds of the collective. The enlargement of farms through mergers and other expansion and the technological revolution on farms has greatly reduced the difference in the position of a member of a collective farm and the Soviet worker in industry. Hence the need of union protection and observance of rights, safety and working conditions, as for all other workers.

The Agricultural Workers Union has a Central Committee of 175 members and 61 alternates. About every two years the union's respective organizations in the 15 republics, 6 territories, 143 regions and autonomous republics and committees of about 3,000 districts hold conferences, where they elect the leading bodies of those areas. The union has about 87,000 primary (local) units. The major reason for the union's effectiveness both in protection of the rights of its members and in production, is the tremendous volunteer army of committee members performing various functions. Their total number comes to 4,500,000. There are 370,000 safety inspectors.

The union's contracts do not only cover those directly involved in farm work. The wide industrial scope of agriculture covers food processing, construction work related to farming mechanical operation, transportation, farm laboratories, scientists in the field, stores in farm communities, all services and white-collar people in farming administration.

In the United States the United Farm Workers Union which, based on the number of agricultural workers should be the country's largest, is among the smallest unions in the AFL-CIO. Even with emergence of the UFW a decade back, it faced the joint attack of the agri-bosses and very reactionary leaders of the "raiding" Teamsters Union, that almost wiped out the UFW. In recent years the UFW regained its base, but at this writing still has little power beyond the state of California. After a sharp struggle, the trade unions of the U.S. succeeded in getting a law passed in California, setting forth procedures for farm balloting on union choice and collective bargaining rights. But so far the agri-bosses have been powerful enough in the rest of the country to prevent such legislation. And, even in California the law still faces endless employer challenges in the courts.

CHAPTER VI

HEALTH CARE IN THE USSR

To an observer from the United States, where there is still no national health bill and where medical care is for sale at extortionate prices on a privately-controlled market, the Soviet health system is one of the brightest aspects of socialism. During the years as residents in the USSR we learned more about Soviet medical care and health improvement than its impressive statistics tell; we had considerable experience with it. And talk about "human rights"; what human right could be more important than the government's guarantee of the best available health care treatment and rest at no cost as an obligation to *all* citizens?

But first let us discuss the general nature and scope of the USSR's health system, the basic principles of which were set immediately after the October Revolution in a decree signed by Lenin. The idea that ALL medical care—physicians, and all other care, outpatient treatment, hospitalization, dental, maternity and child-care, etc., etc.—is free, not costing a kopek throughout a person's lifetime, is more than just a financial matter. In the Soviet Union only a foolish person hesitates or postpones seeing a doctor at the clinic or calling a doctor for a house call. The overwhelming majority in the Soviet Union gets an annual or more frequent checkup. Money is not an excuse for medical neglect or belated discovery of a disease, as is so often the tragic experience in the United States. And the chances of an unnecessary surgery are far less than in the U.S. where surgery brings high fees. The USSR's health system thoroughly integrates all specialists.

Every key judgement is based on more than an individual physician's opinion.

In 1978 there were more than 900,000 doctors in the Soviet Union, a third of the world's total, although the country's 260 million people were about 6.5 percent of the earth's population. On an average there are 2.5 billion medical visits per year, which comes to an average per capita of nine or ten times a year. The number of trained personnel in various auxiliary occupations in medical care is even larger, totaling 2.6 million. Every family belongs to one of the 36,600 out-patient clinics across the country—the most widespread type of medical institution. Each person has one of the physicians as his or her general doctor. In addition, there are specialists and all required instruments and trained equipment operators. Each clinic also has doctors who make house calls, as doctors in the U.S. did two generations back, but don't anymore.

When a doctor answered a call to our home, he or she always had a nurse along to assist. If the regular doctor was off duty a substitute came no matter what the time. If tests were necessary the patient did not have to make appointments at other institutions (for an additional fat fee). All the technology is in the clinic and tests are made on the spot, with a diagnosis soon after the tests are completed. The Soviet Union notes with pride that no inhabited area, no matter how small, remote or far into the coldest north, is without a doctor in the vicinity. Medical study, as all education in the USSR, costs nothing.

There are 33.5 doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants in the USSR; 21.8 doctors in the West German Republic; 20.2 in the U.S.A.; 17.5 in France and 15.7 in Britain. Similarly, there are over three million hospital beds in the USSR, about 120 per 10,000 population, with the corresponding figures in the U.S. and other Western countries far lower. The USSR's 640 secondary medical schools graduate annually more than 130,000 doctors' assistants and other medical medium level personnel.

There are 12,000 out-patient institutions for children. More than 100,000 pediatricians and special children's hospitals with over 500,000 beds. About 56,000,000 children undergo annual

checkups. The USSR also has about 50,000 specialists in obstetrics and gynecology and more than 300,000 obstetricians of medium qualification (midwives).

These are only a few of the indicators of the immense scale of the medical care system in the USSR. It is social medicine at the highest level ever known. It is under the general authority of the Ministry of Health. The tremendous scope of centralized coordination makes possible tests and experience over a far wider base than is possible where private medical practice is dominant. As a consequence, Soviet medicine is widely respected among authorities all over the world. Exchanges which occur with U.S. medical groups, are widespread. There are many advances recorded in the medical field in the USSR and promising innovations in the battle against a number of dread diseases.

The United States, after years of monopoly of the field by the American Medical Association (the main national doctors' organization), insurance companies, drug companies, private owners of hospitals and others exploiting health for profit, is currently in a very serious crisis. The trade unions and other sections of the population have for decades campaigned for a national health law comparable at least to some of the West European plans. But only partial help for persons above 65 was won. All others, unless covered partially by very costly insurance, face financial ruin from serious illness or surgery. A visit to a doctor usually runs to \$30-\$35 and more. A checkup may run into several hundred dollars. Drugs, always expensive, have gone up still higher in price. Surgery could cost several thousand dollars.

DISEASE PREVENTION SYSTEM

A basic component of the Soviet health care system is prevention. This is evident from the emphasis on checkups. Every large work establishment has a corps of doctors and clinical equipment in accord with its size and doctors constantly check on working conditions, the effect of various chemicals or technology on health, pollution and similar problems. Much of the detection of

health hazards begins at the factory level. Such watchfulness brought about measures in coal mines that greatly reduced coal dust, the cause of "black lung", as it is called in the United States. A delegation of U.S. government mine commission officials, including a representative of the United Mine Workers visited Soviet coal mines and came back with a glowing report on Soviet safety and health measures. It was published in the Union's journal. The discovery of mass affliction with "black lung" in the United States, due to new technology which creates a greater volume of dust, has forced thousands of coal miners to leave the industry and has shortened many lives. It took years of very bitter struggle until legislation was passed providing pensions for miners suffering from "black lung". At this writing, it was disclosed that a fourth of the U.S. workers in the asbestos industry are contracting cancer. Congressional hearings revealed that employers aware of the danger many years ago have deliberately concealed the facts.

The Soviet Union's stress on prevention has taken another direction in recent years. This is the rapid spread of prophylactic sanatoria which about 2,200 existed in 1978. More than two million workers have been treated in them that year. The idea really began in 1945, but it swept through the country in a big way more recently. We visited a number of these prophylactorias in Moscow, Tula and other districts. The one in Moscow is for workers who service the city's Metro (subway) system. Located in Moscow's outer ring, near the last stop of one of the lines, it has accommodations for 100, two in a neatly furnished room. It has all the facilities of a small hospital, water and massage treatments, electronic technology, a staff of 16, plus four doctors who come daily at certain hours. There is full kitchen service, a dining room, recreation hall, music room, TV, chess and other games, as well as a gymnasium, oxygen therapy, etc.

The administration of the Metro provides the building, equipment and cost of maintenance and repair. The union of Metro workers is responsible for the medical care and food services, but does not pay for them out of its own treasury. It comes from the government's public consumption fund.

A worker who according to medical checks shows tendencies to illness or a possible deterioration of health, is assigned for a 24-day treatment at the prophylactoria, but continues on his job as usual, spending all the rest of his time at the prophylactoria. He or she sleeps in and gets up mornings as usual to go to work. In the course of the 24 days away from home, patients get treatments and are prescribed drugs by the doctors. During the 24 days the patient is also instructed on how to continue treatment after the stay is over.

S. A. Shalayev, Secretary of the Central Council of the Soviet Trade Unions, said, studies over some years showed the extraordinary success of this preventive system. He cited the center for Moscow's "Red Banner" enterprises, where a year after its prophylactoria opened *there was a 44 percent drop in the number of days lost on the job because of sickness; a fall of 28 percent in applications for medical aid, and a 55 percent drop in the number undergoing special health care.* He cited a similar comparison at the Electrostal plant, where there was also a 44 percent decrease in the number of days lost, a 47 percent decline in visits to clinics and a 29 percent decline in the number suffering from chronic ailments. At Electrostal, Shalayev observed, the administration of the enterprise saved 21,400 rubles in sick insurance paid to the workers while an estimated 346,000 rubles was gained in extra production because of the decline in absenteeism.

At a chemical fibre plant in Kalinin the former 686 days of sick leave dropped to 180 days per year when the system was introduced. Shalayev said there is a trend now for groups of plants to cooperate on construction and operation of prophylactorias. In Kuibyshev a large industrial city on the Volga, 11 plants combined to establish such a center with 1,200 beds. A 220-bed center set up in the Donbass coal basin of the Ukraine to serve several mines proved so successful that a wing with 120 more beds was added. Most of these centers are located in forest or park-like areas and are built like rest-homes, although they are a short ride from the place of work.

THE SANATORIUMS

The major form of disease prevention in the USSR is its network of sanatoriums. The Soviet meaning of the term sanatorium differs from the American use. In the U.S. it is generally understood to be an institution for treatment of communicable diseases. Such sanatoriums are expensive and not always available. In the Soviet Union sanatoria are like vacation resorts that are equipped with all necessary medical, recreational and athletic facilities and staffed with doctors and nurses for health improvement and disease prevention. There are special sanatoriums for treatment of persons with serious diseases.

The general health-improvement type of sanatoria is under trade union supervision, as are most vacation hotels with limited health care and hotels without such care. The majority of persons who go to the health-improvement sanatoriums, as well as those who go to the vacation resorts, do not pay the full price. It is paid in full by only about 20 percent, of the highest wage earners. Another 20 percent pay nothing. All the rest pay just 30 percent with their trade union voucher—an average in sanatoriums of 36 rubles for 24 days for a room, meals, treatments, use of all recreational facilities, etc. The union gives vouchers for sanatoriums to workers who, according to medical check, show need of a health-improvement rest. The minimum legally mandated vacation is 15 working days-off with pay. Many workers get extra days, with as much as six weeks off, depending on the type of work and how it affect the worker's health. A steel worker with from two to six years employment can get from three to ten days in addition to his 24 days regular vacation.

Since all types of vacations cost little or nothing and accommodations are available on such a tremendous scale, there is a great flow of Soviet people to resorts. A family of four, for example, with a union voucher can go for 12 working days to a vacation hotel, meals and all, for 30 percent of the charge or only 50 rubles.

We went twice for 24 day periods to the Soviet Union's "health improvement capital", Sochi, in the Krasnodar district in the

Caucasus. It is the largest such center (although Yalta in the Crimea is not far behind it). The procedures and conditions are the same here as everywhere in the USSR, but for differences in climate. Sochi, with a population nearing 300,000, stretches for 145 kilometers along the semi-tropical Black Sea coast. Its 50 sanatoria, more than 9,000 hotel rooms and many other types of accommodations, housed more than 3,500,000 persons in 1977. And more is being built. The unions have supervision over most of the Sochi sanatoriums. While there, I had an extensive interview with Valentin Kibzun, Chairman of the Sochi Regional Council for Management of Trade Union Health Resorts. He also took us around to see several of the sanatoriums. Kibzun emphasized that the sanatoriums in Sochi do not admit persons who are seriously ill, who appropriately go to hospitals or special sanatoria for various ailments. Those admitted to Sochi's trade-union-supervised sanatoriums combine a restful vacation with treatment for non-disabling illnesses and prevention of illness. Sochi has 51 sanatoriums, but Kibzun stressed that, whether large or small, only room accommodations may vary; there are no differences in the health treatment or medical technology.

Operated under one authority, Sochi is like a tremendous health factory. Its facilities are commonly used. Its five large polyclinics are available to all outside the sanatoriums. Kibzun showed us two giant salt water swimming pools near the beach with people swimming to and from the bathhouse through a tunnelway. Available to all who are medically eligible is Matsesta, the hydrogen-sulphide sodium-chloride springs pumped up from a great depth to provide balneological treatments. The establishment is equipped to give 18,000 treatments daily. Matsesta's curative powers are one of the major attractions of Sochi. Every day special buses make the rounds of the hotels and sanatoriums to pick up those with Matsesta appointments. Such treatments are also available to those in vacation hotels.

Kibzun escorted us to the Metal Workers Sanatorium which accommodates 6,000 metal workers and their families annually. It is serviced by 16 doctors and 40 nurses. The Orjonikidze sanatorium cares for 12,000 coal miners a year. Walking down a hall-

way the establishment's chief doctor pointed to the doors of 31 cabinets, each with a sign identifying the treatment provided. She opened doors to show the different kinds of equipment used. The sanatoriums we saw compared in size to hospitals. Each is surrounded by park-like grounds, with athletic facilities, picturesque walkways, gushing fountains. Inside are libraries, games, TV rooms and auditoriums for entertainment.

During our stay in a Sochi sanatorium there were films, concerts or dancing almost every evening. Arriving at a sanatorium, the guest is directed to a doctor for a physical checkup, notwithstanding the check given at home which qualified him or her in the first place. The guest is then given a booklet, the doctor marking the pages relevant to the person who was examined. He may need certain type of baths, massages, exercises, tests, diet, medication, or other treatments. The guest is advised on whether to engage in strenuous athletics and in general on the regimen advisable in each case. Also, the doctor checks the person periodically. Thus people in the sanatorium carry their little books all the time and watch for their scheduled appointments. We were told that quite often the close checkup of persons in sanatoriums reveal more of a person's health condition than is generally detected in routine examinations. Currently, as disclosed in an article in *Pravda*, there is a drive in Sochi to discourage smoking and drinking. The writer noted that as a result of the campaign sale of vodka in a given period dropped by four million rubles and cigarettes by 600,000 rubles.

Before the Revolution Sochi was a little muddy town. Its advantage as a resort was either unknown or not appreciated. Resorts were certainly not within reach of workers in czarist days. Today Sochi is the gigantic park with sub-tropical plants and miles of beaches attracting year-around people from all parts of the USSR, including many from the cold North and Siberia. But there is also a growing number of sanatoriums springing up as far north as the Arctic Circle, like in the arctic city of Norilsk now with a population of more than 180,000 people. As described at AUCCTU headquarters, the country is dotted with numerous hot springs or other health-giving waters and muds which are

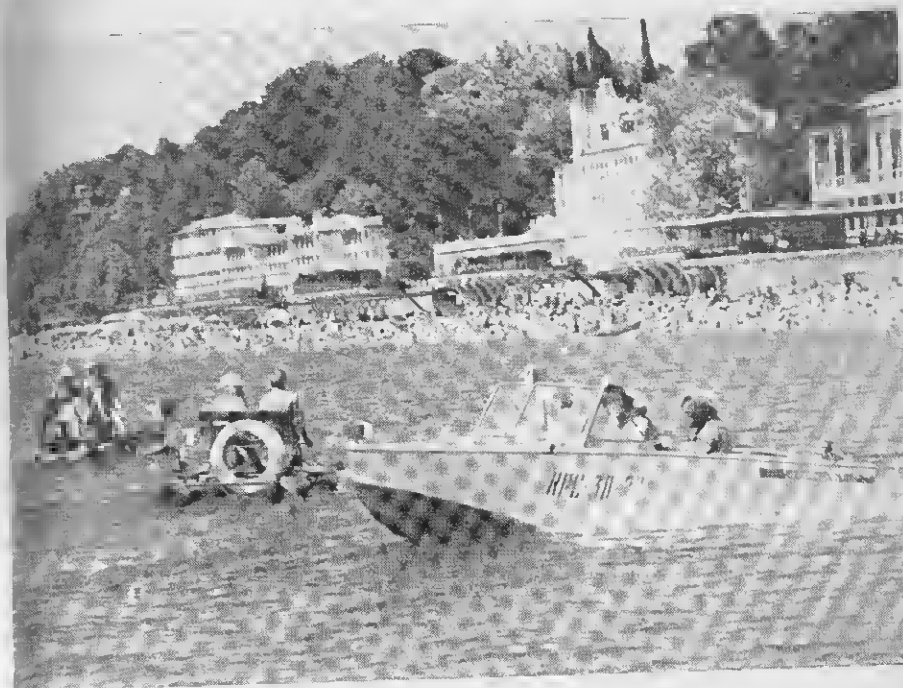
steadily augmented by new discoveries. They are the basis for health-improvement centers in some of the coldest regions. Within the walls of such establishments are semi-tropical plants, heated pools and all the procedures of a sanatorium in Sochi.

One element in the total picture should be borne in mind. In the USSR no one can corner a piece of well located land, a beach front or sunshine or good climate, and exploit such gifts of nature for individual profit. In Sochi there is a monument to Lenin. Carved on the marble is the decree he signed in 1919 that set up the socialist system of health and vacation resorts. It said: *"All localities with curative properties and health resorts are the property of the people" and are to be used only for vacations and "curative purposes"*.

The USSR believes very strongly in making full use of natural means for prevention of illnesses to keep people as far as possible from the hospital or surgery. This approach has helped substantially to raise the average life-span from 44 years in 1926-27 to the above-70 average today.

ENVIRONMENT—TRANSPORTATION

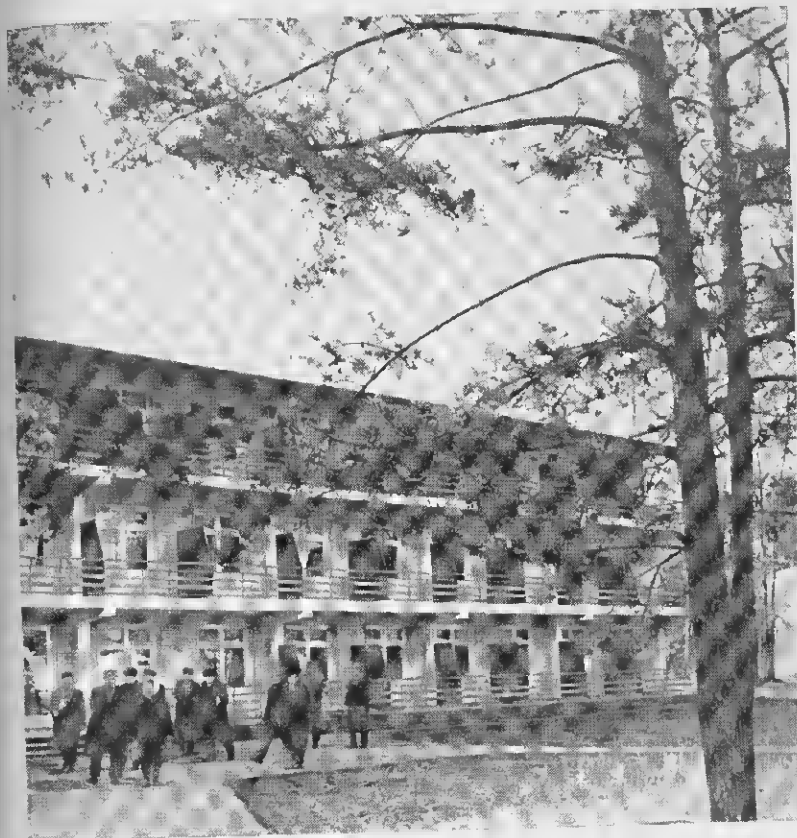
Socialist planning makes possible the design of cities and communities according to a pattern that avoids some of the features of capitalism which menace health and comfort and contribute to the ugliness of many towns. Currently living in Los Angeles, California, I found especially interesting the urban transportation systems in the USSR's cities. Los Angeles is noted as one of the smoggiest cities in the United States, although it has relatively less industry within its city limits than most large cities. But Los Angeles is like a basin, surrounded by mountains. It has a higher per capita of cars than any large city in the U.S. For decades there was discussion of construction of a subway (metro) but the possibility of actually building one is more remote today than ever. The overwhelming majority of the city's population is on an auto basis. Many on small incomes, even in the poor class, are forced to purchase and undergo the heavy



Sochi: health-resort center of the Soviet Union.



The Riviera sanatorium complex



General view of the Shakhiter sanatorium in Truskovets



The dining room of the prophylactorium for the Rapsadskaya mine in the Kuznetsk coal basin

expense of a car because there is hardly a possibility of getting around in the big sprawling city, or getting and holding a job without a car. The only other, and very poor, means of transportation, are buses running on gasoline and only in some areas. Together with the autos they pollute the atmosphere so heavily that often city warnings come over the radio for older people particularly to stay indoors, because there is an actual health hazard emergency. How did such a situation come about? The auto industry, particularly General Motors, a powerful political influence, the insurance and oil corporation here since the thirties pressured the city not to undergo the expense of building a subway, but to be in line with "the future" when every family should have two cars in the garage.

For politicians it was easier to accept such a "solution" than to press people for higher taxes to finance metro construction. Inflation, meanwhile, has lifted the likely cost of a subway several fold. So Los Angeles, although in an area of southern California sunshine and sub-tropical climate, is very unhealthy to many. There are daily traffic tie-ups, especially during the rush to and from work, and, we need hardly add, many accidents and much loss of lives.

While Los Angeles has its peculiarities, all cities of the United States suffer from varying degrees of air pollution, due to heavy reliance on car and bus traffic.

To take Moscow as an example of an opposite trend: in comparison to what I saw there was in earlier years, auto traffic has certainly increased tremendously, but hardly as much as in Los Angeles, which has a third of Moscow's population, or in some U.S. cities much smaller than Los Angeles. Moscow has a subway that was planned in the shape of a wheel, with lines like spokes running through it in all directions, providing a simple and rapid ride to all sections of the city, with buses converging at each of its 103 stations for transfers to short supplementary rides. A substantial part of Moscow buses are also electrically powered. They run by trolleys. Evgeny Arsenievich Legostayev, director of the Moscow Metro, in an interview given to us in November 1976, said that the 164.5 kilometer metro carried a

billion, 922 million passengers that year—and, at five kopeks a ride (7 cents), made a profit and has the funds to finance extension of the lines during every five-year plan. This compared, he observed, to a billion, 300 million passengers carried by the New York subway at 50 cents a ride; a billion passengers each on the Paris and Tokyo subways, and 650 million in London.

In its 45 years the highly automated metro has not had a single accident due to operational fault. Every day seven million passengers pass through Metro's turnstiles, 38 percent of Moscow's traffic. On trolley buses the fare is four kopeks, on the gas operated buses five kopeks and on electrically-run trams on rail lines, retained for short runs in some neighborhoods, three kopeks. People are induced to use public transportation, mostly non-polluting, because it costs almost nothing and gets them to work and other places in a relatively short time. Metro trains come every two minutes, with the wait slightly longer during late hours. Moscow's metro is deep underground because of ground conditions. Every station has escalators. Adding to the further comfort of riders, is the artistic beauty of every station, each one different, a work of the art, with its paintings, sculptures and design symbolic of the country's historic epics, nationalities, and as a tribute to its historic figures, writers and cities. The stations are continually kept spotlessly clean by maintenance people. Anyone caught violating that condition or misbehaving on trains or in stations, faces the wrath of riders and of the maintenance people. When you tell Soviet people of New York's subways, the graffiti covering every inch of wall space, the stench, the dirty cars, the frequent rowdiness, even hold-up of the change clerks and riders they look at you in disbelief, wondering whether you are exaggerating.

Following the experience since the Moscow subways were built, a permanently working subway construction industry has developed in the Soviet Union. Metros were built in Leningrad, Baku, Kiev, Kharkov, Tbilisi. When I was in Tashkent, construction of the metro there was in its final stages and was in operation soon after. The outlook is for a metro in every city with a million or more population. Soon to come or already under construction are metros in Kuibyshev, Novosibirsk, Gorky, Minsk, and Sverd-

lovsk. When in Riga I was told that they too are planning a subway.

During an interview, Legostayev said the Soviet subway builders were helping to design metros in Zagreb, Yugoslavia; Pyongyang, North Korea; in Warsaw, Calcutta, Helsinki; in Sofia, Bulgaria, and in other countries. They are never idle because the lines are extended continually as the cities expand. During the Ninth Five-Year Plan, 19 kilometers were added to Moscow's line. The Tenth Plan envisages more extensions, Legostayev indicated, illustrating on a map.

My work in New York occasionally brought me in contact with members of the tunnel workers, local of the Building Laborers Union. They were once busy on subway work, but most were permanently unemployed or forced to give up their occupation, because no subways were built or extended.

The transportation policy is just one factor that makes life and movement in the Soviet Union "inner city" more livable and healthful. There is much attention to the natural environment. It is a social problem under public control. There are no individuals or corporations who claim a "God-given" right to operate an enterprise anyway they please regardless of how it affects others. To begin with, the Soviet trade unions are vested with authority to forbid or limit pollution of the air and environment in which their members work. Soviet people in general are very outspoken on matters affecting air and environment because they are aware of their right in that respect. It doesn't take long for complaints to reach authorities and for letters to get into the newspaper pages when some industrial violation affects an area. It should be added that the very location of industrial plants is planned so as to minimize environmental pollution where people live.

Also, tremendous attention is given to keeping the urban centers as green as possible. Housing in the Soviet Union is usually in high-rise apartments, considered the fastest and cheapest to build. Every residential building also has a committee from the ranks of its residents, concerned with housing matters, environmental cleanliness included. Every city gives much attention to lining

its streets with trees. As in Moscow, in every city you see squares usually with a fountain or statue in the center, surrounded by trees, flower beds and benches. There seems to be a sort of socialist emulation on beautifying cities many of which emerged from the war hardly more than rubble. So they were reborn. Of the many cities we have seen I would say that Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, among the cities that suffered most under Hitler occupation, is today among the most beautiful and greenest.

CHAPTER VII

SOME STORIES

THE BOLSHEVIK FARMER

Living and travelling in the Soviet Union one meets many remarkable people. In the course of its development, socialism brings out the best qualities, the beauty and vigor of many people on farms, in industry, the academic and art fields. You can get absorbed in statistics and much of the visible evidence of Soviet economic and social progress. But in the final analysis it is the people on the work bench who did it all.

One of these people whom I will never forget is Akim Vasilievich Gorshkov, chairman of the collective farm "Bolshevik" in the Gus-Khrustalny area of the Vladimir region of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. He was 77 years old in 1976 when we came to interview him on a very cold winter day. Gorshkov had managed the farm since collectivization began a half century ago and still refused to retire. We anticipated a pile of figures on the farms progress. Gorshkov did have a typewritten sheet with figures in front of him. But he didn't pay attention to them. He slowly began to describe a village named Narmuch, on the edge of swampy ground, where he lived in before the October Revolution.

"It was like most old Russian villages, backwardness, frightful poverty. You have to read Tolstoy and some of other writers or go to some of our museums to get a picture of life in the villages of that time," he said.

Gorshkov was the only person in Narmuch able to read and write. He became an accountant in a nearby lumber establish-

ment. But when he was 17 in 1916, he was recruited into the czar's army. It was while in the army that he became involved in revolutionary activities, the movement that brought the Bolsheviks to power under Lenin's leadership the following year. He fought and was wounded in the Civil War that followed the Revolution. After several years of study in a Communist Party school in Moscow, friends and relatives induced him to come back to his village, where he became Secretary of the village Soviet. There he also married. Like other active Communists, he began agitating among the villagers for collectivization. He was up against opposition, the kulaks (richest farmers in the villages) were still influential. The people were very backward and skeptical. By 1928, when the drive for farm collectivization began on a countrywide scale, Gorshkov was able to get only five besides himself to sign up for collectivization. He went on:

"Together we had nothing. We asked for land and were given a very swampy area near a village called Nechayevo, with only a railroad station house nearby. All we had were three cows among us and we could barely raise the 40 rubles needed to register the farm land. There were no homes of any kind around—just swampy mud. We started to build huts out of the material around."

At that point he opened a book for children telling his story, and showed a picture of the first hut they built. It looked much like a U.S. Indian tepee of earlier days. It was made of branches, straw and mud, in two decks, the upper one for the women and children and the lower one, on the wet ground, for the men.

"So we went to work with what we had," Gorshkov went on. "There was a factory nearby. The workers helped us dry up some of the ground. By 1929 we began to do things. We already had our own potatoes and cabbage. The government helped us. We got a loan to buy horses. We even started to buy cows. By 1930 we had 29 heads of cattle. We even began to sell cows. We began to have a better life. We built a club for the farm—first to live in, and then, when we had homes, to turn into a club."

It wasn't an easy period. Gorshkov described how the group

was attacked. Peasants in his own village ridiculed the effort and predicted the collective farm would give up before long. But the small collective survived and built a cattle stall. That raised the problem of bringing water to the livestock. Metal piping was not available. So they had to build wooden tubes.

"At one time," Gorshkov said, "the workers of the nearby factory presented us with an old American tractor (there were no Soviet made tractors then). But it had to be repaired about once every half hour of operation. By the following year, 1931, the famed revolutionary Putilov workers of Leningrad presented us, the already established Bolshevik Collective Farm, with one of the first tractors made in the Soviet Union. We received it with a ceremonial welcome. Many of the peasants said that it would mean the end of horses. In 1931 we received a second tractor and our people lived still better. There were many children. We decided that the children come first and must be cared for no matter how many children per family." He recalled one family with five children, another with six.

"As our farm progressed, more and more peasants joined us, contributing their land. The idea then arose to the farm to build our own electric station. Again some were skeptical. But the station was built and the farm had a 100 kw. power source. The wooden pipes were replaced with metal ones. With its growing success, the collective farm was granted more credit. So I went to Poltava and bought 10 more horses. Now we had 18." By 1935 the farm had its own truck.

"People began to join our farm from all sides," Gorshkov continued. "Whole collectives that weren't doing well joined us. Even the peasants from my home village asked to be admitted. By 1936 we already had 43 houses. We even began to apply chemical fertilizer on our soil which wasn't the best."

At that point Gorshkov turned back to 1934 and said, "We realized we needed planning."

"So we went to Moscow to the Academy and asked for someone to help us draw up a plan. An academic came to us and brought along some of his students. But he told us that nothing would come of our effort. The land was swampy and we'd

only get mosquitoes. And he went away. But with the help of his students, we did draw up a plan and it worked. By 1938-39 the farm had a great deal of electrical machinery and complicated technology. Our youth became mechanics. We sent some of them to technical schools. Our collective continued to expand and began to incorporate whole villages.

"By 1941 many thought there wouldn't be any more wars. But you know what happened. Most of our young men went to the front. Our trucks and best horses were taken to the front. There was no one who knew how to run the machines. Things became very difficult and within several months everything came to a halt. So we held a meeting and decided to mobilize our older women to work the fields and many soon learned to work the machines. Everything began to work again and we even surpassed our pre-war production. We plowed more land with these elderly women," he said.

After the war the Bolshevik Collective Farm began to expand even more rapidly, although only half of the 341 young men who went to war came back. "There was not a family that didn't have a loss." Tears came to Gorshkov's eyes as he recalled names of young men whom he saw grow up from childhood. He fell silent for a few seconds.

By 1952 Bolshevik included 22 villages and their lands. Then began the centralization process. The number of villages on the Bolshevik territory was cut by mergers to ten and currently there are just four main centers of collective-farm settlements. They are no longer villages, as the chairman described them, but towns, with all urban conveniences, schools, cultural facilities, and a large club which we were shown later. Four large fully mechanized cattle stalls with a capacity of 200 cows each were in operation.

Gorshkov insisted on escorting us and showing us everything. We saw a large machine shop equipped with metal cutters, drills, lathes for servicing and repairing the large fleet of trucks, tractors, combines and other agricultural equipment. We were shown the club house and its big auditorium, rooms for hobbies and the arts, a library, a general store, schools, a medical clinic, and

a boarding school for children from distant parts of the farm who stay through the week and are driven home weekends.

The central street in the main center of the farm was a long avenue lined with blue cottages, rented at 14 rubles monthly. At the back of each there was usually a garden plot. Bolshevik, when we saw it, covered 8,248 hectares (20,620 acres). Of its population of 2,000 1,054 work.

Before we parted, Gorshkov said that the "Soviet people, very, very much want peace" and saw tremendous new advances on the basis of the Tenth Five-Year Plan that was getting under way. "I'd like to see some of those advances with my own eyes. I think I will. As for the 11th Five-Year Plan, I don't know," he concluded with a smile.

LOVE OF THE MOTHERLAND FOR TASHKENT

Tashkent one of the "miracles" of our time received little attention in the United States. Is it because it was a socialist "miracle" or because the story of Tashkent put the United States to shame?

Seventeen years after my 1959 visit to the capital of Uzbekistan, we came again to behold, for the most part, a beautiful new city with kilometers of new high-rise apartment buildings, new schools, hospitals, artfully designed institutions, and buildings up to 23 storeys high. There was hardly every evidence of the devastating earthquake of 1966 that left about a half-million, a third of the city, homeless. The new 17-storey Hotel Uzbekistan is one of the largest in the USSR. The many one-room baked clay huts that for many were still dwellings in 1959, have disappeared. The city, as Uzbekistan generally, has been experiencing a very vigorous industrial development.

"We would not have been able to do it alone," Mayor Vakhid Kazimov told us in an interview at his office. "The republics of the Soviet Union gave us more than a million square meters of housing, many schools, stores, kindergartens." He added that five

times as much housing was built in Tashkent than the housing space that had been lost.

It really wasn't a miracle. It was a demonstration of socialism and true love by the motherland. When the Soviet government called for help to Tashkent, all the other 14 republics and many of the USSR's large cities rallied with far, far more than blankets, food and tents for the stricken people. *They rushed in with billions of rubles in aid—bulldozers, cranes, engineers, architects, materials, machines, skilled workers. Within a year and a half the destroyed housing was replaced with twice the living space lost.*

We came from a country that also experiences disasters. Fortunately there have been only moderate quakes in recent years. But the U.S. has experienced annual devastating floods and hurricanes that leave vast destruction. There is very little aid besides the type provided by the Red Cross. The President may declare stricken areas as disaster localities, which may make them eligible for possible loans for some private reconstruction. But basically, the problem is that of the individual affected. It's just his or her tough luck in our dog-eat-dog type of society. Insurance either does not cover such "acts of god", or very few can afford the very costly insurance. Such was the experience of hundreds of homeowners during the 1978 record rains in southern California that brought floods, mud and rock slides down mountains.

Tashkent's experience shamed America and other capitalist countries, which hardly display the spirit of a motherland when disasters hit.

The Tashkent quake also formed the basis for a planned rebuilding of the ancient city, now nearing a population of 1.8 million. Looking out of the window, I pointed to a 23 storey building and asked Mayor Kazimov what safety guarantee there was for such buildings in event of another quake. He said that the best available engineers and technicians were brought in to make the new structures as earthquake proof as possible. I gathered from his description that something similar to the principles used in Los Angeles and San Francisco construction was applied.

In planning a new Tashkent it appears that more attention was given to esthetics than is usual even in socialist cities. You

see wide boulevards in place of old narrow streets. Parks are everywhere you turn. There is also much emphasis on color to differentiate buildings and to break the monotony of blocks of high rise apartments. For variation of construction design and creativeness in style, Tashkent is a school for architects. The city reflects the arts and styles of districts of Uzbekistan. They have developed distinct arts and styles in the course of many centuries. Samarkand celebrated its 2,500th anniversary several years ago, and Bukhara, Khiva and other cities are about as old. The cooperation of artists representing each of these variations in Central Asian art is reflected in many aspects of Tashkent's renovation. Work is still going on. The city's opera house, which was new in 1959, suffered some damage. It was also built with the cooperation of the artists from all of Uzbek's regions, each of whom was given a part of the building for painting, creating sculptures, wall designs, etc. They were painting the opera house and restoring some parts when we were there. One gets the impression that Tashkent, having emerged out of its misfortune, is going to look more beautiful than ever. And this is reflected in the spirit of its people. There is a feeling of happiness for having survived. There were very few lives lost during the quake. Their feeling reflects the love they experience from the motherland. Their appreciation of Soviet power is beyond description. They celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the October Revolution by opening the first line of an 8-mile metro (subway), each station representing the art of one of the Uzbek regions.

The Uzbeks were among the most oppressed peoples during czarism. They had a literacy rate of just two percent, and most of that a product of primary school education in Russian, with hardly any education in their own language. Today, K. A. Akhmedov, head of Uzbekistan's State Planning Committee, told us 3.8 million of the country's population of 15 million, are attending a school—including the Republic's 42 universities and institutes, with an enrollment of more than 250,000 students or 176 students per 10,000 population. He said that in terms of education, "such advanced capitalist countries as West Germany and England are behind us". Uzbekistan is today recognized as the major center

of science, cultural development, music, art and opera in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan is also one of the major industrial countries of Asia. Seventy percent of the USSR's cotton crop, five million tons annually, is from Uzbek fields. But most impressive to one from the United States, where the stench of racism still assaults the nostrils, is the equality and integration in Uzbekistan, a land of more than 100 nationalities, and various ethnic and religious groups, with 65 percent classed as Uzbeks and schools teaching mainly in one of six major languages. Other languages are taught where warranted. All speak Russian, as a second language, but Russians residing there are also required to study the Uzbek language.

WHERE CRIME STEADILY DECLINES

During the first weeks of our stay in the USSR, when, after a late show or visit we would be walking homeward on Pravda Street which is usually deserted by eleven, Helen and I were naturally inclined to watch for anything moving in the bushes lining the sidewalks. In most parts of a U.S. city such late walks on deserted streets are hardly advisable. But we soon got over that habit and thought nothing of such walks at midnight or even later, when taxis were not readily obtainable.

In view of the extremely serious crime situation in the United States, we often questioned people on crime conditions in the many USSR cities we visited. The usual reply would be something like, "Oh, yes we have crime." Asked if that meant murders, kidnapping, narcotics pushing, organized syndicates in gambling or prostitution, bank holdups and such, the retort with a loud laugh, would be, "Oh, nothing like that!" They would call attention to hooliganism, meaning disorderly conduct on the streets at some youth meeting places, stadiums and such, stealing on a petty scale, and occasional fights between drunks, especially during holidays. If you press the question, they may recollect some rare serious crime that once attracted public

attention. But crime, as we know it in the United States, does not figure much in Soviet public interest. And when you tell Soviet people a little of America's crime situation, they look at you in disbelief, like something from another world.

The Soviet press occasionally runs dispatches from the U.S. on the periodic crime statistics of the FBI, like the following computerized FBI data for the year 1975 showing that: 21 major crimes were committed every minute, a murder every 26 minutes, a rape every 9 minutes, a violent street attack every 65 seconds, a break-in every five seconds, and a car theft every 32 seconds. Now the crime situation in the U.S.A. has become even worse. But there is no joy over such reports, or boasts about the much better picture in the USSR. People are guided more by what Lenin said of crime, "That the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to *'wither away'*. We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away." I therefore sought and obtained an interview with Soviet authorities on crime, to learn again, as during two previous visits, at what rate crime is diminishing. In January 1959, I had an interview with N.S. Prusakov, then Deputy Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation (the largest republic), and in 1966 with the All-Union Institute for the Study and Work of Means of Crime Prevention. This time my interview was again at the latter organization, with Deputy Director of the institute, Vladimir Zvirbul and his associates, Professors Alexander Sakharov and Valery Shipilov, prominent authorities in the field.

In summary, our 1977 meeting affirmed with even greater force the discussions of the other two meetings (published on June 6, 1959, and November 29, 1966 in the *Worker*). Essentially, the institute's spokesmen pointed out that the process of decline of crime has advanced much further and is taking on characteristics of the stage of developed socialism; that habits and remnants of the old capitalist order are dying off faster; that crime has by no means been completely eliminated, and

will not be for some years to come; that there are even zig-zags within the current general decline, due to some special, local conditions, such as new cities; that serious crimes have declined most significantly; that most prevalent crimes are not serious; that with the increase of motor traffic in the USSR there is even some increase in crimes of negligence; and, as stressed in the 1959 and 1966 discussions, it was again noted that there is no "professional" crime, organized crime, like the U.S. syndicates or gangster-type rackets.

The institute's data show that crime in the USSR has declined to a fifth of the pre-Revolution rate per hundred thousand of population. Some weeks after the interview, S. Bannikov, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR, in an article in the January 26, 1977 *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, wrote: "In approximately the past fifty years, there has been a decline of crime in the USSR by three and a half times, although the population rose by 117 million."

In reference to juvenile crime, I was told that about 10 percent of the offences come from youths 14 to 18, for the most part petty offences. "But we give primary attention to juvenile crime, because it can lead to serious crime," Professor Sakharov observed. The second most numerous crime group is in the 18-25-year age group among whom hooliganism and other types of minor crimes are the most common. But the majority of what is considered as serious crime is committed by the 25-30 age group.

Drinking is the most serious problem in the USSR, because some of the major crimes are committed in a state of drunkenness and by alcoholics. But there is no evidence anywhere of narcotic addiction or drug pushing. There is no possibility of drugs coming in from another country. The only sign of drug use is among seamen who occasionally acquired a desire for narcotics abroad. They may substitute medical pills obtainable in pharmacies, but nothing stronger. Also, in some remote mountainous areas of Asia old hashish habits may still survive. Nor are there any signs of commercialized prostitution. The total absence of organized crime or syndicates makes perpetuation of any kind of crime rackets impossible.

The following two reports give an indication of the extent of alcohol and drug abuse in the United States. In a report to Congress made public October 18, 1978, by the National Institute of Alcoholic Abuse, an estimated 10 million Americans are alcoholics, with as many as 205,000 deaths annually due in large measure to heavy drinking. That report also estimated that 3.3 million youths aged 14 to 17 have drinking problems, that contribute much to teen-age crime.

In a report published by Associated Press October 22, 1978, the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimated that heroin addicts in the United States numbered between 416,000 and 496,000 in 1977 and in that year there were 950 heroin-related deaths. The report is obviously an underestimation because addicts do not register but rather seek to keep their habit under cover. Nor is account taken of the far larger number addicted to other drugs.

An extensive campaign is conducted against drinking in the USSR. Placards and other forms of caricaturing drunkenness as a very vile habit, are seen everywhere in the Soviet Union. The price of vodka has increased substantially. Drunks caught driving lose their license. Sale of alcoholic beverages to minors is punished heavily. There are no saloons. Another form of control is through the comrades' trials in plants before fellow workers. A drunk would sooner spend a day in jail and face a judge at the other end of town than his fellow workers. The approach of the comrades' trials for workers who drink too much, scandalize their families or insult people, is to confront them with the accusation: "You shamed us."

The institute heads presented me with the latest of their texts on criminology, which they are continually bringing up to date. The material contains interesting breakdowns on various types of crimes. Crime against the government and types of terrorism which existed in the early years of the Soviet system have been eliminated long ago. Crimes of irresponsibility, bribery and similar crimes by state employees, once very high, are down to seven-to eight percent of all convictions. Women have a very low rate of convictions for crimes and hardly any in the very

serious category. The texts say convictions have been running about eight for men to one for women. Sakharov pointed to a section in the book showing that overall crime dropped by more than half since 1946.

The principle the institute stresses on the basis of its very extensive research, is rehabilitation of the convicted. *In reality only a tiny percentage of those convicted and imprisoned—four-tenths of one percent of those convicted, they told me—are actually behind bars, as they are in the U.S.* These are the most dangerous criminals, repeaters, who are given a slim chance of reform. But no matter how long the sentence, with 15 years the maximum, a prisoner can serve only three years in prison. Prisoners are then transferred to a closed work colony to serve the rest of the sentence. They may be put back in prison if they violate conditions in the colony. A still lighter form of sentence is somewhat like the U.S. parole system, assignment to a work project, usually construction, with requirement of regular reporting. This is punishment for crimes not considered dangerous, with a three year maximum. Violations in the latter type of colony can lead to transfer to a closed colony.

In all work cases, the inmate is paid for his work and enjoys the same rights and hours as workers. *"We consider that a person cannot become an industrious member of society if he doesn't know how to work,"* said Sakbarov, explaining the Soviet approach, which also includes education of inmates and encouraging them toward reforming their lives.

The particulars and lurid details of crime, the main attraction of newspapers, TV and radio in the United States, are not featured in the Soviet press or media generally. Information on crimes may come in the form of reports by correspondents on how crimes or violations of trust and rights have been exposed and dealt with in a given situation. Also, the papers have daily reports on the disposition of complaints from readers, exposure of irregularities that often result in censures of those accused, or may even lead to prosecution.

Upon our return home we were struck by press accounts of the continued steep rise in U.S. crime. On February 20, 1978, the

Los Angeles Times ran a story on the U.S. Census Bureau's survey, that showed the FBI's report for crime in 1976 of 11.3 million, was understated by almost 30 million. *There were 41.1 million crimes in 1976.* The FBI's reports are based on the number of crimes registered with the police departments of the reporting cities. The Census Bureau, the agency that conducts the population count for the government every decade, based its projections on interviews with crime victims to get a true picture. Actually most people having no clues, do not even bother to report crimes to the police, considering it futile to do so. Certainly most rape victims do not desire identification.

Another item. An Associated Press dispatch reported crime among U.S. women rose sharply, according to a government study—from 10.8 percent arrests in 1953 to 16 percent in 1975. Still another item, also an Associated Press dispatch, reported a nationwide rise in violent crime including a five percent rise in rapes in the first half of 1978.

The *Los Angeles Times* of March 5, 1978, ran a report on the research study by Hopkins University sociologist, Harvey Brenner, submitted to the joint Congressional Economic Committee, showing the direct relationship of crime to unemployment. His report based on the study of the unemployed in the 1970-75 period, found that for every one percent increase in unemployment there was a 4.1 percent rise in suicides; 3.4 percent increase in admission to state prisons; 5.7 percent greater admission to mental hospitals; 5.7 percent increase in murders.

The steadily rising toll of murders in the United States is the subject of a current book by John Goodwin, entitled *Murder U.S.A.: The Way We Kill Each Other* (Ballantine Books). Goodwin observes that the murder rate is rising in the entire capitalist world, with the United States "in grim solitude at the top of the murder heap". In 1975, notes the author, "We lost 20,510 people by criminal violence in this country, a casualty list ten times that of combat dead for the last three years in the Vietnam war." The figure he cites, much higher since 1975, covers only direct intent-to-kill murders in the process of committing crimes, conspiracies to murder, gang warfare and such. Murder due to

negligence on highways, in industry and other conditions are not listed as murders. The Los Angeles police department, for example, reported that murders in that city of 2.5 million population rose from 588 in 1977 to 649 in 1978, and major crimes as a whole in the city rose 8.3 percent in that year. The local press greeted the news as not so bad because other of the country's large cities have a worse murder record.

Most shameful in America's crime picture is the victimization of the aged and retired, helpless targets of criminals. Commenting on a Harris Poll finding that fear of crime is "the greatest dread" of men and women in urban areas, *Senior Citizen News*, organ of America's largest organization of retired persons, said in its October 1978 issue:

"The haunting fear of being robbed, nudged, or murdered turns former outgoing, sociable men and women into introverted hermits to spend most of their hours behind heavily bolted doors, locked in their own fear of the outside world.

"This tragic story is true for elderly people in cities across the country. The pattern is the same all over, old people left behind in neighbourhoods long forsaken by those who could afford to get out."

The National Council of Senior Citizens is currently waging a campaign for more effective efforts by the government to protect people from crime. But their pleas are hardly more effective than such appeals in the past. So routine has the steady rise in crime become—and the mass unemployment, narcotic addicts, uncared for mentally disordered people, who are its major sources—that it is practically regarded as a part of the "American way of life". In the U.S. the human right to safety and protection from crime does not exist!

THEY ESCAPED FROM ISRAEL

For weeks preceding the Zionist sponsored conference in Brussels on February 17, 1976, attacking the Soviet Union on the false charge of barring Jews from emigrating to Israel, the

Daily World office in Moscow was flooded with letters from Soviet Jews denouncing angrily the conference and the anti-Soviet campaign. Most of the letters were carbon copies of letters addressed to major U.S. newspapers and the press services. Upon checking, not even one appeared in the letter sections of the U.S. press, nor even acknowledgement of their receipt in any form. Protests from Soviet Jews against the lying press stories of "oppression" of Jews in the USSR, just go into the waste basket. But if even one letter were received favorable to the Zionists, that the anti-Sovieters could use, it would rate a headline.

The letters I received, and they must have come to far more than 100, confirmed strongly what has often been pointed out to persons deceived by anti-Soviet propaganda of the Zionist stripe, that Jews in the USSR hold positions in science, medicine, the arts and in managerial or other important posts, proportionally exceeding that of almost every other ethnic section of the country's population. The attitude conveyed in the letters is exemplified by Efim Yusifovich Andrachnikov, who wrote the letter to *The Washington Post*, which didn't run it:

"Soviet Jews are first of all Soviet citizens with equal rights, and our motherland is the Soviet Union." Born of a poor working class family, he wrote, his father was killed in 1919 by the czarist anti-Semitic bands and his mother was murdered by the Hitlerites when they invaded Kiev in 1941.

"For 25 years I have been the director of an enterprise in Moscow with 2,000 workers. For more than 20 years I have been elected a deputy to the Soviet. The government has honored me 11 times, four times with orders. My wife is a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Republic and is chief doctor in a hospital." Andrachnikov noted that his four children have received higher education, as have his sons-in-law and daughters-in-law and they hold responsible positions.

"This we obtained from our socialist system, for which we are ready, if need be, to give our lives," he concluded.

Daniel Eizenshtat, who heads a large construction directorate,

wrote, "In our large establishment there are workers of various nationalities, but none of them feel any kind of oppression of which the Zionists scream so hysterically. The Soviet Jews, honest workers for their motherland, will never be supporters of the Zionists."

N. I. Kirtzman, chief specialist in the faculty of a mechanical institute, wrote, "Gentlemen, that's enough. Stop. All this is dreamed up and a bluff. You talk of the Jews in the USSR because things are bad for you. It is you who are torn by crisis, inflation and discrimination."

So the letters went on and on, in a similar vein.

Shortly before the Brussels conference, in reply to the Zionist campaign emanating chiefly from New York and Washington, Novosti Press Agency and the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called a press conference attended by about 500 Soviet and foreign newsmen to hear what seven former emigrants who escaped from Israel, had to tell of the land of "milk and honey". From the reports of the seven who were in Israel, it is evident that it is far more difficult to get out of Israel than to emigrate from the Soviet Union.

Valery Kuvent, 35, who left the Soviet Union for Israel in 1971 and returned in 1975, described how he was hidden in a trunk to get to Cyprus. From there, he, his wife, mother and three children went to the United States. He chose to escape the draft, which was invoked against him when he indicated his refusal to go on the radio to lie about the conditions of Soviet Jews.

"As soon as you find yourself in Israel, you come to realize that the Zionists need you and your family to make their job easier to populate the occupied Arab lands. People are being resettled in annexed territories," he said. "Just think what it means to live in places from which thousands, hundreds of thousands of people have been driven out. These people are now huddled in tent colonies and slums which are bombed by Israeli aircraft... We Soviet Jews have nothing to do there. Israel wants to use us as unskilled workhands and cannon fodder."

Kuvent described one case of a Soviet emigrant who was taken in to the army in handcuffs. Also, a friend's son who lost an eye during childhood was forcibly enlisted in the armed forces and told, "Moshe Dyan also has only one eye, but wears a military uniform."

Klara Kreis, her husband beside her, described how they "struggled out of Israel" with their two children and made their way to Vienna where they received permission to return to "our real homeland".

"I was prepared to wait, be it ten years, for permission, if only I could return," she went on. "Israel is a racist society. For example, a Vietnamese woman came to Israel with her two children whose father was an Israeli. She wanted to become a citizen of Israel and was prepared to adopt Judaism. Zionist propaganda was then shedding tears over the fate of Vietnamese refugees. But the chief rabbinate ruled they were not interested in her conversion. The Vietnamese was expelled from Israel so that the 'chosen race' might be kept pure."

Kreis described how the immigrants from the USSR are treated as second-class citizens by the rabbinate and the ministry, and are termed "half breeds". And Israeli "blacklisting" of people on religious ground is well known, she added. Her children were required to study from textbooks like "Sefer Hokazari". That book asserts, she quoted, "The race of the people of Israel is the best of all races and that the Israelis are the chosen people." She referred to another text approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture that states "the Jews are the elite of mankind". Lazar Kreis, her husband, said that thousands of Jews are eager to leave Israel, but it isn't easy, because they must show they have settled all their debts. Under the law, every male under 60 is liable for military service. He named a number of persons who corresponded with him, who long to get out. "Aaron Kurolopnik, who is in his eighties, is dreaming of returning to Kiev to be buried in the soil of his country," he said.

¹ At that time, Moshe Dayan was Minister of Defense.—Ed.

"Ninety percent of the immigrants want to return. Soviet Jews have nothing in common with those who live in Israel. We speak a different language, we think and live differently. Soviet Jews do not belong to a 'world Jewish nation' which was invented by the Zionists."

Boris Bravstein, who went to Israel with his wife, two children and mother, said, "We discovered that everything in that 'Jewish state' was strange to us—the culture, the ideology and even the psychology of the people. Zionism turned out to be a variety of racism." He described a playground of a block of modern apartments circled by barbed wire. "Children of European Jews were playing inside while children of Jews who came from African lands watched from the other side with envy in their eyes."

"The Zionist theorists," Bravstein went on, "say that Israel was 'chosen by God' for a special mission to fulfill and that the Jews are of the purest race. Hitler wrote the same thing in his book 'Mein Kampf'. There is an ideological kinship between the nazis and the Zionists—both are racist."

Isaak Kaplan described how he and his wife had to sell almost all their belongings on arrival before they landed jobs, he as a laborer and she as a charwoman. His wife hanged herself out of sheer despair. "In the Soviet Union we were regarded as human beings. In Israel they treated us like slaves. We were despised for being 'Russians', for not knowing the local language and for refusing to pray in the synagogue," Kaplan said. "Every few months, prices double, rent, water, gas, electricity, telephone charges, foodstuffs and public transport costs. Taxes are high."

"I was ready to hike across all Europe to kiss the stones of Moscow's streets. I fled and returned to my real homeland. Here I regained my spiritual composure and life again smiles at me," concluded Kaplan.

Ilya Fuzailov described the "debt book" that all immigrants are slapped with as they are processed on entry. "They make their own entry in the debt book in Hebrew. You don't know what is written there. You just see figures and sign the document." The reference is to the prices of all "benefits" the arrivals

get. They eventually mount to a sizable sum and must be settled before one can get permission to depart from Israel.

"Most pitiful is the state of Israel's children. They have no future." Fuzailov went on, "I visited the family of my relatives who have five children. They are doomed to receive an education no higher than four classes."

Describing the wooden barracks in which settlers of occupied Arab lands live, Fuzailov said, "Israel's main aim is to create a buffer, a barrier out of emigrants from the Soviet Union, who would receive the first blow if anything happens."

Itzhak Zeltzer, a mechanical engineer who received a higher education in the USSR, conceded that nationalism and Zionism had been a factor that led him to emigrate to Israel, also the concept that Israel was the "promised land" and the "home of all Jews". Referring to the saying that it is better to see a thing once than to hear about it many times, Zeltzer said, "I saw once what I had heard about many times. It took me a little less than two years to understand that the only correct and reasonable decision was to go back to my country." Zeltzer said he was disillusioned at the sight of enmity among ethnic groups and along class lines in Israel. He saw the antagonism between "poor and rich", between "Sabras (Jews born in Palestine) and Jewish immigrants from Asia and Africa and favoritism toward Jews who come from Europe and America".

Like others who went to Israel, said Zeltzer, he was not a Communist Party member, but it is not right to say he isn't a Communist, because for one living in the Soviet Union "the way of life itself fosters progressive views" in a person. But when he found himself "in a different world and was confronted with social injustices" his decision was to return to the Soviet Union. "I support the call of the Communist Party of Israel—'with the Arabs against imperialism' not with imperialism against the Arabs."

As all those who returned had said, Zeltzer reported that he and his entire family have been restored their former rights. He is working as an engineer in the Ukraine city of Chernovtsy and everything is alright.

During our stay in the USSR frequent reports appeared in the press of the increasing number of appeals from groups of emigrants for readmission to the USSR. One group of more than 300 in Vienna sent such an appeal, as did another of about the same size in Italy. Soviet citizens often reported letters from friends or relatives who left for Israel, pleading tearfully for something to be done to rescue them from Israel. But it soon became apparent that the Soviet Union will not permit the abuse of Soviet citizenship, as something that can be thrown and then restored.

When in Tbilisi, Georgia, I asked Communist Party Secretary, Victoria Sigadze about the exodus of Georgian Jews who comprise the largest number of those who went to Israel. They are a sect which had settled in the Caucasian land centuries ago. To thousands among them the idea of a "Jewish homeland" had an appeal, but they believed that in Israel they would be together in one area. They were disappointed, however, when they were scattered, and came into sharp conflict with the Israelis over conditions of work and seasonal unemployment. "Recently the Georgian government has received a flood of appeals for permission to return," said Sigadze. "But those appeals have been denied." Many are asking the right of return "for the sake of their children", Victoria Sigadze went on, with assurances that "the children would not repeat the mistakes of their elders". The Georgian Jews, according to reports, have even put out their own newspaper in the Georgian language in Israel and formed Georgian amateur art circles, much like those they had in the Soviet Union, she said. Victoria Sigadze also noted that many Georgians of Jewish extraction who did not leave, hold important posts in the government and in the academic world of Georgia.

The story was the same in Lithuania, Latvia and the Ukraine. In Lithuania, the government official in charge of handling immigrant matters told me he has a big stack of letters from emigrants begging for a right to return. They all receive the same reply. Spokesmen for devout Jews at the Moscow, Tbilisi, Vilnius and other synagogues ridiculed the anti-Soviet propa-

ganda that Jews have no freedom of worship or that synagogues are shut or restricted. Chief Rabbi Yakov Fishman of the Moscow Choral Synagogue, interviewed by my wife, Helen, told her that there are no restrictions of any kind and that there is a functioning Yeshiva for rabbinical training. He told her of receiving stacks of letters from former worshippers who emigrated, with pleas that he could do something for their return.

Rabbi Fishman also indicated that the problem is not restriction of worship, but rather the decline of desire to worship. "I had hoped that my two sons as well as my grandson would be interested in rabbinical study. But they don't want to. So I can do nothing about it," he told her.

On return home, we found a substantial number of emigrants to the "Jewish homeland" now concentrated in districts in New York City and Los Angeles. Israel was just a half-way station for them to go to the U.S. or other Western countries, in the belief that, as some immigrants three or four generations back, they, too, would "get rich". They are learning through bitter experience that times have changed—that opportunities for even petty businesses are very rare and require investments beyond the reach of these runaways from Israel. After a brief period of some help from Jewish agencies to settle, they are on their own and soon discover conditions are harsh—unemployment, inflation, and all the other beauties of our "dog-cat-dog" capitalist system.

HOW THEY LIE

The large number of newsmen of the capitalist press in Moscow, always sniffing around for a possible anti-Soviet story, came in full force on January 5, 1977 to a press conference called by the Council of Ministers to announce some price changes. They thought for the first time they would have "ground" to wire to the world that the Soviet Union, too, has an inflationary condition. But what they got was really the very

opposite. Price Committee Chairman Nikolai Glushkov announced a list of price *decreases*. The reductions taking immediate effect in the stores: knitwear by an average of 12 percent; hosiery by 25 percent; men's, women's and children's underwear by 10 percent; refrigerators by 12 percent; vacuum cleaners by 15 percent; recording tape by 23 percent; recorders by 20 percent; shoes by 10 percent; TV sets by 17 percent; record players by five percent; electric razors by 17 percent; and a number of the higher-priced medicines, antibiotics and others, by as much as 50 percent.

Glushkov then came to some price increases, observing in advance that they were items that had not been changed in price for as long as 30 years. For example: made-to-order clothes, which are so low in cost that a suit made to order was often cheaper than ready-made suits in the stores. Consequently, the government has had to subsidize tailoring to the tune of several billion rubles annually. Adjustment of that price has long been overdue because ready-made clothes are in plentiful supply. Similarly the very low-priced taxi fares and certain domestic airflights and river excursion trip rates went up. The only manufactured products raised were cut glass and carpeting of a certain type, souvenir art books and natural silk products. Clearly, none of these are items of mass consumption and they have little influence on the monthly budgets of the people.

What did the U.S. capitalist press do with that story? The headlines mentioned the price increases, implying to the readers that now the socialist USSR is also gripped by inflation. On April 6, 1977, *The Herald-Tribune* of Paris, an English-language daily owned jointly by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, reprinting the stories of those papers the day after the taxi increase took effect, ran the headline: "Muscovites See Red in Fare Hike: Boycott Taxis in Angry Reaction to 100 Percent Increase". As I wired to my paper then "one need only stand a few minutes on Gorky Street, or on any other Moscow arterial highway, to observe taxis shooting by in droves".

After the increase, as American tourists observed with surprise, the Soviet taxi fares were still much cheaper than in New

York or other U.S. cities. The same was true with respect to air and water excursion fares. The problem was not only one of taxi fares, but of a long needed adjustment to make the use of taxis fairer. The very low cost of taxis encouraged many people to use them to go to and from work. Often people paid taxi drivers to stand by while they shopped or on other time-consuming occasions which abused taxi service. Elderly people or those sick and seeking transportation to clinics, were often unable to get a taxi. At late hours, after shows, it was hard to get taxis, because so many used them when they could have just as easily taken a metro or bus. After the increase there was an improvement, and many of those who used taxis daily, especially for no good reason, simply joined the millions of daily metro and bus riders at four and five kopeks a ride.

The price adjustment really illustrated the socialist policy of lifting the REAL standards of the people by price reduction and stabilization and making the annual wage increase meaningful, because the Soviet economic policy insures a non-inflationary economy. The government in this case decided to eliminate the loss of billions of rubles that kept certain luxury or less essential products and services at very low cost and *shifted these billions to lower the cost of mass consumption products*.

Glushkov pointed out that there was no increase in the price of food. Meat has for many years remained at the same level, costing the government heavily in subsidies. The extremely low price of medicines, most often just a few kopeks even for prescription drugs, has not been raised. But some medicines termed high-priced—perhaps over a ruble, such as imports and antibiotics, were reduced drastically.

Apparently fully aware of what capitalist newsmen were looking for, Glushkov patiently explained how Soviet price policy works. He observed there is a continual check on the prices of some 10 million items. He pointed out that in the past 15-20 years there was no noticeable change in prices. In 1975, he disclosed, prices were, on the whole, 99.7 per cent of those in 1972. He called attention to a change in the price of fish some years ago, which makes fish much cheaper than in the United

States, but at the same time he noted that the price of caviar was boosted. That, of course, must have been a terrible shock to the Soviet people. During the Ninth Five-Year Plan, he observed, no important price changes were made.

Glushkov also informed the newsmen that the Soviet government subsidizes the most essential products of mass consumption. In the very bad year of 1975, when there was a heavy loss of beef cattle because of a very low grain harvest, the government subsidized meat prices by 19 billion rubles to insure there would be no change in the long-standing price of two rubles a kilogram (almost 2.5 pounds). Similarly, he noted, the rate per square meter of housing space had not changed since 1927 and the government subsidizes housing maintenance at five billion a year. More than 800 million rubles in government subsidy are provided for children clothes, shoes and other products, which partly explains why those prices are exceptionally low. He also noted that the price of bread is kept low in a similar way.

The Associated Press service, going to every newspaper in the United States, and to most of the world, ignored the facts and just wired the false "taxi boycott" story.

CHAPTER VIII

WHICH SOCIETY PROVIDES?

Which society provides economic security, progress and a better life for its people? This is the standing question as the world of socialism and capitalism co-exist and compete.

Soviet people often asked what the average wage is in the United States. Also, in the United States many ask what the average wage is in the Soviet Union. Implied in these questions is the mistaken belief by many that the figure in either case indicates the living standard in the respective country.

Americans are either uninformed of or minimize the Soviet government's "hidden" wage, as the consumption fund is often called. That fund now above 100 billion rubles annually and rising steadily, even faster relatively than the annual cash wage, is equal to about a third of the direct wage. Secondly, given the endless inflationary trend and high U.S. tax deductions, while Soviet cost-of-living doesn't rise, a mechanical comparison becomes increasingly meaningless. Thirdly, the sense of values between peoples of socialist and capitalist countries differs sharply especially in cost-of-living items, so that formal comparisons become ridiculous. Fourthly, the very concept of measuring living standards in terms of what people prefer in food, life style, culture, recreation, etc., as well as priorities, differs on traditional or other grounds among countries in general and between peoples of capitalist and socialist countries in particular. *Finally, you soon learn that the Soviet peoples do not measure*

their standard by how close they approach the American or any other Western standard but by how far they have gone beyond their past standard. In that respect they see themselves steadily escalating.

The basis for determining the "average" also differs. There are no able people who are unemployed in the Soviet Union. There are no people in the USSR who are in the "welfare" category or on charity. The term average has real meaning in the USSR because even among wage earners there is not nearly as much differentiation between the lowest and highest wage earners as in the U.S. In fact, there are neither rich nor poor. On the other hand, the U.S. statistics on "average" wages made public monthly exclude the families of unemployed, hardly ever below six percent of the workforce. Neither are the millions of families on welfare taken into account. In the U.S. we don't get an average based on ALL families in the working class.

Let us see what happens on the basis of the monthly calculations that are available in the two countries. If the U.S. worker is a renter the family would have to part with \$250 to \$300 or even more, plus utilities, per month, for an apartment in cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago or San Francisco. If the worker "owns" the home as many millions do on mortgages usually for 25 to 30 years, at interest rates currently of ten percent and higher, the cost of housing is even more expensive. Other costs are also either far higher than in the Soviet Union or have no equivalent cost at all in the socialist country.

The U.S. government continually updates in step with inflation its three "typical" urban center budgets. The classification is based on its survey of the budgets in U.S. cities by families in the "low" standard, the "intermediate" standard and "high" standard. There is considerable differentiation among some cities, many in the South lower in comparison with those in the North. But the government's national average as of the Fall of 1977 finds that those on the low "subsistence" budget spend annually \$10,481; on the "intermediary" budget \$17,106; on

the "high" budget, really of lower middle class level, \$ 25,202 a year.¹

In general, the major and strongest unions strive for the "intermediary" budget in their bargaining demands but most unions settle for far short of that. Most families with even two wage earners don't come up to the "intermediary" budget. The government figure on average wages for all workers in the United States for July, 1978 was \$206.55 weekly. Taking into account the eight percent increase in the cost of living since the Fall of 1977, when the three budgets were brought in line with inflation, even if the "average" worker works the full year he or she would earn *just about what the "low" budget calls for*. A family depending on only one such wage earner is in serious difficulty. But let us see how *the 1977 "intermediary" budget* was composed:

The government says in 1977: food took \$4,098 for a family of four; housing \$4,016; transportation \$1,472; clothing \$1,182; personal care \$377; medical care \$985; other family consumption \$909; other items \$763. Then the taxes on an average take almost a fifth of the budget; deductions for Social Security \$961, personal federal taxes \$2,342. But not listed are state income taxes and in many areas local income taxes and an assortment of other levies, heaviest among them property taxes for those who "own" homes.

On the other hand let us take the structure of a budget of a Soviet family in 1975. As given in the very informative work of Ludmila Rzhanitsina (Soviet Family Budgets, Progress Publishers, USSR). It is based on the take-home pay of a family—which in 1975 came to a general Soviet-wide average of 4,000 rubles per family of four. In addition are the consumption fund benefits that on a national average come to about an equivalent of a third of the cash income.

¹ The Bureau of U.S. Labor Statistics, bringing its 3 "standards" up to autumn, 1978, in line with inflation, announced them as \$11,968 for the "low"; \$19,303 for the "intermediary" and \$28,525 for the "high" budgets. But on top of that revision was the almost 11.5 percent increase in the cost of living, by government figures, for the year 1979.—Ed.

But the family budget here is different from its U.S. counterpart. In the Soviet Union people spend very little on taxes (an average 8 or 9 percent of the family budget), rent (4 or 5 percent) and transportation. Medical care, social security and education are free.

The above-quoted figures show that an average family in the United States spends about 40 percent of its income on purchases, since taxes, social security, medical bills, education, rent and the like take up the other 60 percent. An average Soviet family spends about 80 percent of its budget on purchases.

The really important point is this; *Soviet prices are stable and changes in the family budgets are in an upward direction. The only change since 1975 was the Tenth-Five-Year Plan annual real increase in wages of about 3.5 percent.*

The workers in the U.S. must continually strive through union struggles often with strikes and loss of work time and earnings, to keep in step with inflation. There has in fact not been one year of decrease in the U.S. cost of living since the crisis thirties. At this writing the workers of the U.S. are substantially behind inflation. *The Labor Department's report for September, 1978, showed average real wage earnings, after allowance for inflation for the year, and federal income and Social Security taxes, are 3.3 percent lower in purchasing power than for the same month in 1977, an even larger amount below real wages in 1972.* It was in the same month in 1978 that the Labor Department data showed it takes two dollars to cover what one dollar bought in 1967. The formal nominal income is steadily losing its significance as a measure of wages; it is how much REAL income remains after tax and inflation deductions that is meaningful.

From our experience as residents in the USSR, however, it would be a mistake as of 1978 to conclude that the *material* living standard of Soviet workers is already close to that of workers in the United States, especially the organized labor force in basic and major industries who are near or at the intermediary level budget. Such workers have a substantial advantage over Soviet industrial workers in terms of housing

space, food, especially fruits and vegetables, as well as textiles which are less expensive, with a better choice and quality available. I don't mention automobile ownership as an advantage, notwithstanding the fact that many times more workers in America are car owners than in the USSR. Such an advantage is becoming more and more questionable in the face of the effects of the overabundance of cars as in the U.S.—air pollution, extreme congestion, loss of 50,000 lives a year on the roads, the extremely rapid rise of the cost of car maintenance, insurance and the nervewracking, time-losing daily struggle with traffic to get to and from work. The emphasis in socialist countries is on more subways and other forms of rapid and convenient public low-cost transportation and on the avoidance of wasteful traffic high in energy consumption, so prevalent in capitalist economies.

Shopping in the USSR suggests that relative neglect of consumer needs, caused by many years of necessary sacrifice and emphasis on building up basic industries, needed to assure a sound foundation for a rapid socialist advance, as well as the inheritance of a backward agricultural system, have left their mark. The Soviet press features many complaints over the lack of certain products or the difficulty of buying them because of inadequate supply. At times it seems, as we ourselves experienced in Moscow, certain vegetables and fruits may be in abundance in one part of the country and hard to get in other parts. There is also considerable complaint in the Soviet press over the quality of products. These harsh facts are given much space in the Soviet press, with frequent letters from readers.

The most important fact is this, however: as we observed it ourselves over a period of almost 20 years, consumer products have improved steadily both in number, quantity and quality. When we recall the shoes and clothing we saw in earlier years, the improvement is striking both in quality and style. Today the stores know that poor-quality and out-of-style items are bound to go unsold. We noticed in some stores a departure from the rigid legal enforcement of one price on an item everywhere in the USSR, with counters selling products that have been piling up at reduced prices. But we also noticed that the Soviet people

are not jamming those counters. They crowd where new and better goods are sold. The Tenth Five-Year Plan's key slogan calling for better quality has very much stimulated this tendency.

In the light of statistics showing that the USSR has reached a level of 80 percent of the U.S. economy, with 20 percent higher population it is apparent that the USSR still has a way to go to catch up. But it will catch up as the trend indicates, and before long. *The USSR has no crises that halt and even reverse progress. In socialist countries products are more equitably distributed, not as in the U.S., a land of many millionaires and a class of rich who consume a disproportionate amount of the products, while millions are deprived or even hunger.*

There is, however, a real fundamental question: is the only measure of a living standard the amount of food, clothing and shelter people have? Living in the Soviet Union or in any other socialist country, you soon realize that there are other very important factors that determine the standard of living and way of life. To cite a few: the people of the Soviet Union have peace of mind, something no working people in the U.S. can have. Soviet people never have to worry over the right of employment. They aren't plagued by inflationary prices and can safely plan their budget and the purchase of major items even years ahead. They have no worry about education costs including that of higher education. A Soviet citizen can live his whole life without paying anything for health care. Nor does he have to worry about meeting his next month's rent because it is among his smallest expenditures. Child-care is not the worrisome problem it is for working mothers in the U.S., because excellently equipped and managed child-care centers for millions of children are available at trivial cost. Retired persons can meet their costs comfortably with their pensions because their *major* needs are insured from the consumption fund. Entertainment; music, art, film showings, sports activities and amateur activity, are available to Soviet citizens either free of charge or at low cost. Centers for school-age children, Pioneer Palaces and such are a must in every neighborhood throughout the Soviet Union, so that nowhere are the streets the play areas for children. There is no

youth problem in the Soviet Union such as plagues the U.S., because young people are guaranteed training and jobs, with mandatory occupational guidance by an experienced mechanic or work team, plus time to complete their education if desired, as well as time to prepare for exams. Above all, the Soviet system creates a society that inspires people to work collectively, to be cooperative and comradely, in contrast to the division, hatred, rivalry, cheating and "everything-is-money" concept that capitalism engenders in people. The accumulative effect of all those factors adds up to a revolutionary change in the substance and style of life. They add up to very positive influence on the health and mental state of the people of the Soviet Union. The elimination of so many worries which are a routine condition for most Americans, gives Soviet people greater opportunity to do what they enjoy in the cultural, sports, education or other fields, as can be seen from the statistics on the way Soviet people live.

But this is far from all. As we demonstrated in the section on crime, the Soviet Union has a history of steady decline in crime. Most important has been the total disappearance of organized crime, of anything even resembling the crime syndicates so powerful in U.S. urban centers, with armies of "pushers", trafficking in narcotics and inducing drug use especially in elementary schools and colleges. Most crime still in existence in the USSR is in the category classed in the U.S. as "petty" or "moderate" offenses. But, as we observed earlier, the basic approach is to reform people, rather than the capitalist way, which only results in the rise of crime. There are no "red-light" or "skid row" districts in Soviet cities, no commercialized prostitution, sexist "entertainment" films or pornographic literature, today a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States. There is no juvenile delinquency as we know it in the U.S. The press is not filled with crime stories and the lurid details of how criminals do their work, thereby actually conveying crime techniques to those not yet infected by the evil. Soviet TV is free of the type of crime and violence that saturates U.S. television. Certainly freedom from the fear of walking on the streets,

going to parks and visiting friends during evening hours is an important element in the Soviet way of life. Soviet people do not have the gnawing worry that youths, even children, will fall into the clutches of narcotic "pushers". In the Soviet Union persons in need of mental treatment are not roaming the streets as so many do in the United States. Congressman Claude Pepper, who heads a Congressional Committee, revealed that large numbers of mental patients are either released prematurely, or cannot gain admittance for treatment for lack of space, because many cities in crisis are "economizing". And that hardly takes account of the large number of crazed narcotic addicts desperate to obtain the high cost of heroin, who either attack, rob or even kill people to get the money.

Gangs and gang wars are unknown in the USSR. Gang wars among youths are unheard of. In the U.S., according to government crime figures, a number of cities have more than 1,000 murders a year. A recent disclosure placed the number of killings in youth gang warfare in Los Angeles, at nearly 150 a year.

The capitalist business ethic infects every facet of life in the U.S. You can't get away from it even during time off to watch a TV program, news, a sports event or a children's program. It becomes nervewracking when there is an interruption for two, three or four advertisements every five or seven minutes. There is a free-for-all misrepresentation of products. There is virtually no control of any sort for protection of the public from false claims in U.S. ads over TV, in publications, or in the ugly street billboards you see everywhere. The Soviet Union almost has no commercial advertisements on its TV, radio, in its publications or anywhere else. One may see large electric slogans on the USSR's peace policy, its five-year-plan objectives, on the various aspects of good citizenship, observance of safety and similar subjects.

There are no charity or welfare rolls in the Soviet Union. As described earlier, Soviet people are entitled to all sorts of state-provided benefits. *But these are a right just as Social Security pensions are a right in the U.S. (although Soviet people have no pay deductions to finance them).*

In the U.S. there is a permanent and growing population numbering more than 15 million men, women and children on welfare. Others live on charity from religious or ethnic organizations, or as beggars. This "welfare community" is at the lowest level among the 24 million (an underestimation) the government's statistics class as poor. There are in addition families of workers temporarily unemployed and drawing unemployment insurance.

Welfare families are at the point of depending entirely on the government's hunger budget. Most live at this level for many months and years no longer with even a hope of obtaining a job and getting off the cursed welfare. There are thousands of families with three generations on welfare, forced to live in extreme poverty almost permanently. The adults on welfare, permanently idle, are not even counted in the jobless statistics.

A phenomenon that has drawn much public attention in the recent period is the rise of wife-beating and terrible abuse of children, so much so that national conferences have been held on the menace and organizations have sprung up to deal with it. Congressional hearings have also been held to consider legislation. Published surveys estimated that as many as 1.5 million to three million wife-beatings a year occur, and 1.1 million serious abuses of children. There is no other way to explain this sudden emergence of an ancient outrage than the various forms of mental disturbances, family breakups due mainly to unemployment and poverty, and the influence of such conditions on children.

It is in the midst of such an atmosphere that illiteracy is increasing in the United States "at an alarming rate", Senator McGovern observed recently. Another indication of the atmosphere is a study by the National Institute of Education, released by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, that estimates 5,200 attacks annually by students on teachers. It points to the tension in the school system across the country, a reflection of the tensions in the homes of millions of Americans.

This is just a partial listing of the degeneracy, decay, crime and fraud U.S. capitalism breeds. The capitalist system cannot

provide the right of safety to people from crime, fraud and other evils because all those evils are products of the capitalist system.

There is little wonder that recent polls showed a majority of the people cynical about the politicians of both parties and government institutions. In the 1976 presidential election, only 54 percent of those eligible to vote cast ballots.

Running through this jungle of capitalist exploitation and every form of crime and fraud is the stench of racism. A quarter century after the Supreme Court ordered desegregation of the school system, many of the major cities, like Los Angeles, remain more segregated than ever. Currently there is a tendency, with the help of some court decisions, to weaken some of the equal rights laws that were enacted during the civil rights upsurge of the 1960's.

A sad commentary on the present civil rights situation in the United States was the report of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission on February 12, 1979, ironically on Lincoln's Birthday and the annual "Civil Rights Week". The commission found that 46 percent of minority children (Black, of Latin origin, Asians and Native Indian) were still attending segregated public schools although almost 25 years had passed since the celebrated Supreme Court decision ordering desegregation of the school system. The commission, itself a government body, charged the Carter Administration and Congress with obstruction of efforts for speedy desegregation. Significantly, the most serious of the continuing segregation is no longer in the South but in the north-eastern and central industrial states, mainly in the cities where the Black population is now concentrated.

Hardly a pretty picture of America today! To come to the question we started with: which society provides a more secure, progressive and fuller life? An ordinary person who lived on both sides of the class boundary line, in a position to give an honest opinion, *can only conclude that for working people*, the advantage is by far on the socialist side, already now, even when compared with the U.S.A., the richest country in the world. Such a view is not expressed by the corps of U.S. correspondents

in the USSR because they are hired and paid to deliberately lie and distort conditions in the socialist lands to find anything that would give a bad look of the USSR to their readers. They step up their lying and distorting as the socialist economy reaches new heights and conditions for the people improve. Deceit is the only defense the capitalist powers have today against their own people as more and more information trickles through of the progress under socialism and the rising number of countries which are taking the socialist path. A typical example of the role of a capitalist correspondent in the USSR is the succession of correspondents from the *Los Angeles Times*. Living in Los Angeles in recent years, we have seen how Murray Seeger, succeeded by Robert Toth, in turn succeeded by Dan Fisher, served their master, one of the most vicious anti-Soviet newspapers in the United States.

The strategy of the rulers of America is to maintain a journalistic iron curtain, to make it impossible for the people to know that *it is possible to have a social system and form of life in which the sicknesses of capitalist society do not exist*. As a consequence a large section of the people is "educated" to believe that this sick condition is the unavoidable "normal" course of life and one has no alternative but to fight one's way through the jungle in order to survive in it. Some do so through organization and in a class-conscious way. Others count on more money as the weapon. But either way it is an endless struggle.

Workers in the Soviet Union, as in all Socialist countries, also have to wage a struggle but not against a profit-hogging ruling class but on the production line. They are fully aware from their experience that fulfillment of the economic plans means a better life for the working people. In frequent discussions with Soviet workers I noticed that many were most puzzled by the fact that the greater the amount produced by U.S. workers, the higher their productivity and the more advanced the technology, the greater is the number forced into the ranks of the unemployed and the more eventually wind up among the impoverished.

In summary:—there is very much in the standard of living and way of life of the people in the socialist countries, notably

under the advanced stage of socialism in the USSR, that is not available to U.S. workers and cannot be purchased in a capitalist country with the much higher earnings. That, of course, is based on the assumption that there is far more to satisfaction in life than even the overabundance of purely *material* goods that may be within reach of some high-paid U.S. workers and middle-class people. In recent years especially better-off Americans have found that neither they nor their children can be walled off from the law of the jungle in the sick society surrounding them.

Some visitors return from the USSR with mixed impressions. On the one hand, they tell of major advances, on the other, of surprising vestiges from the past such as the use of the abacus in stores, the unavailability or scarcity of many items common in the West, tight living quarters in many apartments built in the earlier years, and the sight of many as yet unmodernized villages. The question arises: how can you call this "developed" socialism? Such impressions come from tourists who make the usual two or three week fast run through several cities with hardly time to see much, and what they see is on the surface. It is also unfortunate that many who make the trip, quite expensive from the United States, are persons who can afford it. A large number among them of the middle class standard. Working class groups generally apply a more realistic measure and look for the more basic aspects of Soviet economic and social development.

Most important to bear in mind is that the workers and peasants of Russia took control of a land that was among the most backward even at its high pre-Revolution point in 1913 and even that was shattered in 1917 and through the years of civil war that followed. The key task was not only to re-establish the economy but to drive on further to *build it up to a level high enough to provide a sound base for socialism*. In the process the living standards of the people could not equal the *rate* of economic rise although it did rise steadily. World War II had tragic consequences on the economy and living conditions.

The significant fact, historically unprecedented, is how well

the people of the Soviet Union understood the policy and how they responded as heroically and enthusiastically on the economic reconstruction front as they had in defense of the country and socialism against the nazi invaders. Since the postwar reconstruction got under way there has been a much swifter rate of economic advance, and furthermore—the *gap between the RATE of economic advance and the RATE of improvement of living standards for the people tended to narrow, especially in the most recent years.*

This is clearly evident to anyone in a position to make a comparison. My prolonged visits in 1959, 1966, 1970 and residence from 1975 to 1977 made that comparison possible. The most important aspect of the USSR's "developed" socialism is what ordinary tourists are hardly able to see and fully appreciate—the rapid and gigantic buildup of the economy, the level of technology and science and the great projects the socialist system is now able to undertake. In some key industries the Soviet Union is now first in the world. *The USSR today has the means to plan and accomplish objectives so large that even the richest of the crisis-ridden capitalist lands dare not attempt them.* A major reason is not only the available technology and skilled labor power, but also the fact that the USSR, in building its many subways, railroads like BAM, housing, health and rest centers, is *motivated not by profit but by social needs.* In the U.S., with profit the sole motive, many railroads are idled, subway plans have not come off drawing boards and housing is even deliberately curtailed to keep up the prices and high rents. But there is another major factor in what is termed "developed" socialism. *During three generations there has been a steady elimination of the evils inherited from the pre-Socialist society, such as exploitation of the labor of others, greed, superstition, hatred borne by racist and nationalist division, organized crime, ignorance and illiteracy, the ideal of a life of idleness, forced unemployment and the many other unlamented habits and way of life under the old order. The very concept of rich and poor is no longer applicable to Soviet life.* Even the majority of Soviet grandparents have not seen a "rich" Soviet person with their own eyes. In

two years we did not see a single beggar in a country that was once notorious for its many thousands of beggars. The concept of "charity" and "home relief" is strange to the younger Soviet citizens. *Moreover, the three generations have served to educate, train and organize the Soviet people along a distinct new course of life—a socialist way of life, already advanced substantially as noted in the foregoing pages.* Soviet society scorns those who seek to live in idleness and terms living from questionable sources violation of the law. Soviet people are honored according to the degree of their contribution to the social good. Racism or any form of abuse of persons based on religion, color, or nationality is punishable as a crime. Soviet society also provides a gigantic framework for socialist emulation. The overwhelming majority of the people, whether in factories or offices participate in the emulation among cities, factories, areas, and strive to reach planned goals and social objectives sooner than their "competitors", in the spirit of what is called "Communist attitude to labor".

The Soviet Union is also a society that strives continually to reform people rather than to punish them, as was already noted in the parts dealing with crime and the widespread "comrades' trials". More and more the problem of prevention of wrongdoing and maintaining order is shifted from the militia (police) and the courts to the people. The eight million *druzhinniks* across the country, the volunteers with red arm-bands who contribute a specified time to prevent disorder, at times for traffic duty, is another example of the socialist element in Soviet life. Most important are the continual steps taken to involve the USSR's public organizations in responsibility and management of public affairs, especially the trade unions.

The above is only a partial summary of the many elements that have influenced the thinking, ethics, and mores of socialist society, *which have advanced parallel with the USSR's economy and living conditions. They are an equally essential element in "developed socialism".* This, too, can be best recognized by living in a socialist society and associating with its people. The transformation of the people to a socialist ways of life and the rejection

of habits formed over many centuries under feudalism and capitalism, was not an easy process and will not be completed in the foreseeable future. There still are vestiges from the past, but they are no longer the dominant factor as in the earlier days of the Soviet Union.

In view of the above summary, one might ask, "Don't Soviet people have anything to worry about?" They do have worries and concerns, some of which resemble ours. Soviet health scientists still grapple with cancer, heart and other diseases which the capitalist world hasn't solved, and these diseases take their toll in the Soviet Union as elsewhere. There are still family problems, often growing out of drunkenness. People with responsibilities have worries because everything doesn't always go smoothly according to plan.

The most serious concern we observed among Soviet people is PEACE. You see it in placards and on monuments everywhere. You hear of it in the speeches and statements of the Soviet leaders. And most of all ordinary people are bound to ask you how Americans feel about peace and the arms race. No farewell is complete without a "may we never have war". The Soviet people know the horrors of war as no other people in all history. The Soviet people have full confidence in the country's course and its peace policy, and count on further substantial improvement with each five-year plan. They have reached a stage when reap the full benefits of economic advance. In their Tenth Five-Year Plan they see the rapid pace of progress satisfying consumer needs. They also read of the new goals for the 11th Plan on which the government is working, as well as of some major objectives planned for 15 years ahead. *But there is one key element that cannot be planned with certainty, because peace is not yet secure and the arms race is not curbed.*

Aside from the ever-present danger of war, the Soviet people, just like Americans, see much of the country's wealth that could be better spent for the needs of the people, going for arms. The people of the Soviet Union, so conscious of the horrors of war, fully understand that the only deterrent to threatened attack is adequate armed might. Many do wonder, however, if the

common people of America will be sufficiently aroused to be effective in limiting the armament drive. They read in the Soviet press how escalating U.S. arms expenditures heavily erode the welfare of U.S. crisis-ridden cities, potential jobs for the unemployed, housing, schools and other real needs for which the U.S. people are clamoring. In contrast to sabre-rattling in some U.S. quarters during the years we were in the USSR the government's pro-peace activities were manifested in many ways. Hardly a week passed when at least one government's delegation did not arrive in Moscow to exchange views with the USSR's heads to strengthen relations and trade. They came from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe—from dozens of countries. Some came from tiny lands, others from lands as large as India. Most often Leonid Brezhnev took part in the conferences. Whether led by heads of state from Communist, socialist or Western lands, whether by monarchs or leaders of newly-liberated countries, they were all accorded a warm welcome. These conferences were usually concluded with published communiques expressing a joint agreement on detente, peaceful settlement of all disputes and an identity of concern over major war-danger spots in the world.

The personal role of Leonid Brezhnev in the struggle for peace has been especially noteworthy. As an ambassador for peace, he has traveled to many socialist and capitalist countries, voicing his views and extending a hand of peace not only to the heads of governments, but directly to the millions of people who welcomed him. No head of state matches Brezhnev in his active role as the world's most forceful crusader for peace. He personifies the strong desire for peace among the people of the socialist world.

The Soviet Union's policy is a powerful spur to a world-wide movement for detente and against the arms race. This was reflected in a number of the broadly representative peace conferences held in Moscow in recent years, with delegations from movements far beyond left influence. Very impressive was the conference of religious organizations initiated by the Russian Orthodox Church. Never had so many denominations of world religions gathered and agreed on a common goal, notwithstanding

their historic differences. They agreed to mobilize the various Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Jewish and many other sectors of the world's believers in a struggle for peace and detente. It was indeed a colorful gathering, with most of the participants wearing the raiments of their religion.

A strong popular confidence in the policy of the USSR's leadership is based on the belief that the policy can prevent war. Such popular confidence in a government's foreign policy is rare in Western countries. It is especially low in the United States even to judge by the periodic polls that show large majorities against the Pentagon, for continuance of detente and expenditure on domestic needs rather than for more armaments.

One of the busiest spots in Moscow is "Friendship House", a palace of odd architecture built for an extremely wealthy man before the Revolution. On almost any day one can meet visiting delegations there and observe events demonstrating the friendship between the USSR and one of the hundred or more countries with which it has friendly relations. Those mutual friendship organizations are very active in promoting friendship and the principle of peaceful co-existence. Each one has an office staffed by people familiar with the given country and language, where visitors are welcomed. The same approach is followed in every city of the USSR. Every republic has a friendship organization.

A source of encouragement and popular confidence in the Marxist-Leninist peace policy is the firmly established economic and political solidarity among the Soviet Union and East European socialist countries, which have now also come to the stage of building developed socialism. But especially noteworthy during the very eventful two years of my Moscow assignment has been the stream of representatives from the "third world", recently liberated peoples *who have decided to take the path to socialism*. They spoke as fraternal guests at the 25th Congress of the Communist Party, the 16th Congress of the Trade Unions, the Women's International Conference and other gatherings. But more significant were their official journeys to Moscow to enter into formal cooperative relations with the Soviet Union, in order to receive its help technologically, culturally, politically and

in other ways, to speed their development along socialist lines. It was the period when Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Congo Brazzaville, and other countries embarked on the socialist path and when the victory was sealed for Socialist Vietnam and Laos. Socialist influence also became more pronounced in a number of Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

The broadened base for world socialism has also brought about a change in the Moscow scene from the Moscow I knew in earlier days when the USSR was the one socialist country. You see and meet many people of all races, colors, and tongues, from lands that not long ago were colonies. Now they are in embassy staffs, or students in Soviet universities, or among the thousands in Lumumba University, established especially for training peoples from newly liberated countries. Aid to peoples who strive for independence and to remain free, is an integral part of the Soviet Union's basic policy, as of the other more advanced socialist countries. It reflects a change in the United Nations since the days when a handful of Western powers dominated it. Today it is the peace and freedom forces, led by the socialist bloc, that have the initiative in the United Nations.

There has been quite a change since the days when even some well-meaning people looked on the Soviet Republic as an "experiment". The much widened and strengthened world socialist system has served to open new horizons for the Soviet Union as well as to set a faster pace of progress for a score of countries with varying degrees of socialist development or orientation.

In the foregoing pages I have tried to present some aspects of the USSR's developed socialism, as seen in the course of travel and my work as a correspondent. It is only a brief account. There is far more to see and tell of the distinct characteristics of the *developed* stage of socialism. And those features are by no means static. They are continually taking form in every sector of Soviet life. As Leonid Brezhnev stated in his very significant article in *Pravda*, November 23, 1977, on the profound changes that have taken place between the 1936 and 1977 constitutions:

"When the Marxist-Leninist classics, lifting the curtain of time, charted the course for Socialism and Communism, they were extremely careful; not a grain of utopianism; no flighty fantasy. They projected only what could be scientifically proved; basic trends of development, the main, fundamental characteristics. Theoretically it was clear that the transition from capitalism to communism would embrace a long historical period, that the new society would go from one stage of maturity to the next. But no one could tell in advance what these stages would be in concrete terms. Engels wrote that the question of the various stages of transition to a Communist society 'is the most difficult that exists'. . . Lenin and the Russian Communists were the first actually to face and have to answer that question."

Brezhnev then proceeded to cite the changes that have taken place since the 1936 Constitution. Among them:—an 18-fold increase in the gross social products; development of nuclear power, electronics, computers, transistors and such advances; a five-fold increase in real income; growth of the working class to more than 70 million, two-thirds of those gainfully employed, in contrast to a third in 1936; more than 73 percent of the workers with higher or secondary education, and other such economic, cultural and social indicators. Therefore, now *"it has been possible to achieve an appreciable swing of the economy toward ever fuller satisfaction of the people's many and varied material and cultural requirements"*, he said.

He also stressed changes in the character of the population: *"Several generations of working people have already grown up under the new system. They have been nurtured in the spirit of collectivism and comradely mutual assistance in conditions of victorious socialism, having never experienced the oppressive, traumatic atmosphere of an exploitative society."* He further noted the *"unbreakable alliance of the workers, peasants and intellectuals"*, and the integration of the many nationalities in the USSR:

"The formation of a historically new social international community—the Soviet people—has become an important characteristic of developed socialism in our country, an indicator of the

growing homogeneity of Soviet society and the triumph of the nationalities policy of the CPSU," continued Brezhnev.

Brezhnev's reference to socialist democracy probably shocks some in the West. He wrote:

"Socialist democracy is one of the worldwide historic gains of the Great October Revolution. Here democracy has revealed itself for the first time in its true meaning, that is, as the power of the people. For the first time, true equality in the area of civil and political rights has been won by those who NEVER BEFORE EXPERIENCED IT UNDER AN EXPLOITATIVE SYSTEM—in other words, by the working people. Also for the first time the principles of democracy have been extended to all spheres of the life of society, including its very basis—production relations."

The Soviet people led by the Communists first faced the questions posed by the founders of Marxism more than a century ago. They met the very difficult problems and paid very dearly, at times with rivers of blood, in defense of socialism. Today across the land you see immense projects that stand like monuments to Marxism-Leninism, such as the construction of BAM, and KAMAZ, the VAZ auto works, Bratsk, Krasnoyarsk, the Ust-Ilimsk cascade, Nakhodka's new port, the big cities in the Arctic zone and many others.

As *Pravda's* editorial put it on January 2, 1978, "Every year 20 new cities, every week, eight major objectives are commissioned (put in operation), every week 45,000 new apartments."

Such construction is testimony to the desire for peace and an end to wars forever. People and their leaders who engage in such tremendous construction certainly do not want another destructive war.